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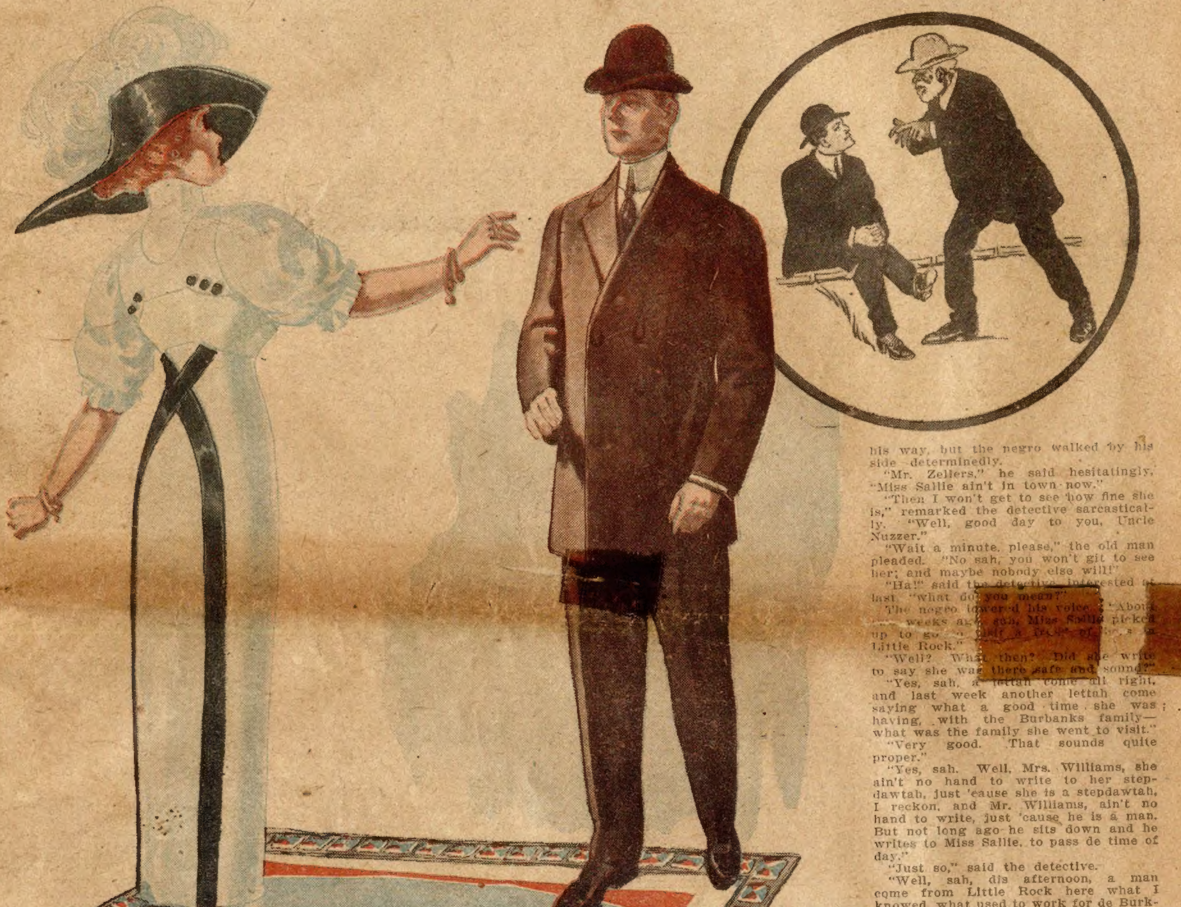
The Mysterious Detective;

Or, HOW KEENEYES HID HIMSELF

By J. Breckenridge Ellis



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CHAPTER VII.

HELP DESIRED.

THE detective had gone but a short distance after parting from the banker's wife, when he was overtaken by an old negro with gray hair and jet-black skin. Despite his age the man showed considerable agility in catching up with Keeneyes.

"'Scuse me, sah," said the newcomer, "but am dis Mr. Zellers?"

"It am," said the detective resignedly.

"Yes, sah, yes sah, dat what I heerd when I was wucking around de hotel. After you goes out, I hears Mr. Willams and Mr. Weevely a-talking and fust thing I knowed, dey says you de gre't detective, what we-all is in de habit of calling 'Keeneyes.'" And the speaker drew closer.

Keeneyes looked at the old man attentively, as they both stood on the sidewalk; but he did not utter a word.

"And when old Uncle Nuzzer hear dat," continued the old man, "he des tek out after you; but you gits in Mrs. Williams' kerridge and I ain't spry 'nuf to ketch you offhand immedjit."

"You are old Uncle Nuzzer, I presume?" queried Keeneyes.

"Yes, sah, I call' dat for shawt. My full name is Nebcudnuzzer. And when I hears dat you de gre't detective, I pow'ful anxious to come up with you, sah."

"Why?"

"Becaze, sah, I's in a mighty peck o' trouble, and nuffin but de gre'test kind of a detective kin git me out."

"But I didn't come to Cobbville to get people out of trouble."

"I 'spec not. You come to git 'em into it, mo' lak. But anyway, you is here, and I hopes you'll listen to me."

"What kind of trouble is it?"

"It 'bout Miss Sallie Williams."

"Ah? A daughter of Mrs. Williams, eh?"

"She ain't no dawtah of Mrs. Williams, Miss Sallie ain't, no sah. She Mr. Williams' dawtah and Mrs. Williams' stepdawtah. Yas, sah. She got a rich bankah fah a father, and a roaring lion fah a stepmothah. She de only chillun dey is, Miss Sallie Williams, as fine a young lady as ever see de light of Arkansas, sah."

"And what is the trouble about Miss Sallie Williams?"

"What is de trouble? It hard to 'spress, sah."

Keeneyes made a movement to go on his way, but the negro walked by his side determinedly.

"Mr. Zellers," he said hesitatingly, "Miss Sallie ain't in town now."

"Then I won't get to see how fine she is," remarked the detective sarcastically. "Well, good day to you, Uncle Nuzzer."

"Wait a minute, please," the old man pleaded. "No sah, you won't git to see her; and maybe nobody else will!"

"Ha!" said the detective, interested at last, "what do you mean?"

The negro lowered his voice. "About [illegible] weeks ago, sah, Miss Sallie picked up to go [illegible] visit a [illegible] of [illegible] in Little Rock."

"Well? What then? Did she write to say she was there safe and sound?"

"Yes, sah, a lettah come all right, and last week another lettah come saying what a good time she was having, with the Burbanks family—what was the family she went to visit."

"Very good. That sounds quite proper."

"Yes, sah. Well, Mrs. Williams, she ain't no hand to write to her stepdawtah, just 'cause she is a stepdawtah, I reckon, and Mr. Williams, ain't no hand to write, just 'cause he is a man. But not long ago he sits down and he writes to Miss Sallie, to pass de time of day."

"Just so," said the detective.

"Well, sah, dis afternoon, a man come from Little Rock here what I knowed, what used to work for de Burkbanks family and what would be working for 'em if he was there now, for he hain't never quit 'em. And he come around me lak he always do when he is in Cobbville, to borry a chew and to pass the word; and he say to me, he say, 'What dat 'bout what Mr. Williams done wrote down to Little Rock to his dawtah staying with the Burbanks?' he says, Says I to him, 'What's it to you?' He say, 'Miss Sallie, she ain't never been visiting my family,' he say."

"Indeed?" remarked the detective quietly.

"Yes, sah; he say Miss Sallie never there. Never there a-tall!"

"Where is she?" inquired the detective.

"That's what I want to know," said Uncle Nuzzer. "If she ain't dar, whare is she? You done said a true word, sah. And if she ain't been dar the past two weeks, how come de letter just a week ago, saying how she was enjoying her visit down dar?"

"It is certainly strange. What do Mr. and Mrs. Williams think about it?"

"Well, sah, dat de strangest part of it all. Soon's I heerd dat Miss Sallie nevah been to Little Rock, I goes to Mrs. Williams, and I says, 'Mrs. Williams, didn't you 'spose Miss Sallie was habituating in Little Rock?' I says. She tell me mind my business, in de spitefulest way dat nobody can't do to such perfection as Mrs. Williams kin. So I just ups and goes to Mr. Williams."

"What did he say?"

"I says to Mr. Williams, 'Mr. Williams, didn't you 'spose Miss Sallie was visiting Miss Adelia Burbanks down to Little Rock?' He say, 'Well, why not?' I tole him what dat niggah been telling me. He just laugh and say, 'go 'long, Uncle Nuzzer!' But I could see, for all dat, dat he powerful cut up about something."

Keeneyes meditated deeply. He recalled how uneasy Mr. Williams had been because he was in town, and how anxious he had been to know why he was there. He remembered how Mrs. Williams had threatened him because she believed he had come to town to investigate some crime.

Could it be possible that Mr. and Mrs. Williams did not want him to find out where their daughter was concealed? And did they suppose that he had come to Cobbville in order to reveal her hiding-place?

Keeneyes had been fully resolved, on coming to Cobbville, to have nothing to do with mysteries, but he found himself engulfed in them, not only so, but deeply interested.

At last he said: "Uncle Nuzzer, come with me, after you have told me all you know. I'll decide whether or not it'll be worth my while to hunt for Miss Sallie Williams."

CHAPTER VIII.

The old negro followed Keeneyes.

Keeneyes without a word, led the way back to the big new house which he had offered to buy from young Caldwell, and which Caldwell had refused to sell.

There was something mysterious to the detective about this big residence, so recently erected. If Caldwell had built it as a speculation, why had he refused to sell at a higher price than he had asked for it? If he had not built it to sell, why had he built it?

As Keeneyes understood, Caldwell was unmarried, and had no near relatives. Yet he persisted in living in the mansion by himself, although he had said he wanted to sell it.

As the detective came near, he observed, as he had believed he would find, that Caldwell still stood at the front gate.

Keeneyes pretended not to know that Caldwell was in existence, but old Uncle Nuzzer spoke to him respectfully with: "Good ebening, Mr. Caldwell."

"Good evening, Uncle Nuzzer," said the young man, looking somewhat uneasily at the detective, as if wondering why the negro was with the other.

"Now," said Keeneyes, to Uncle Nuzzer, "this is a delightful spot to continue our conversation."

So saying, he deliberately seated himself upon the edge of the sidewalk, only the width of the planks from the front gate.

Uncle Nuzzer stepped out in the road to face the detective, while Caldwell remained behind him leaning upon the gate and staring in surprise.

"You tell me," said the detective to the negro, still as if unaware that Caldwell were listening, "that Miss Sallie Williams——"

Keeneyes suddenly checked himself to turn about and look full into Caldwell's face. At the name Caldwell had started and turned pale.

"Oh," said Keeneyes, "so you are there."

"Yes," said Caldwell, "this place belongs to me."

"You have no objection to my sitting here on the public highway, I trust?" inquired Keeneyes politely.

"I have no right to object."

"True enough. Very good. And so, Uncle Nuzzer, you say that Miss Sallie Williams——"

Again the detective paused, and again he looked searchingly at Caldwell.

"What do you mean by using that name in such a manner?" demanded Caldwell hotly. "Miss Williams is a friend of mine, and I resent your manner."

"I am sorry my manner doesn't please you," said Keeneyes cheerfully. "And I am glad that Miss Williams is a friend of yours, for in that case, perhaps you can tell me where she is."

"What do you mean?" cried the young man, fiercely.

"I mean where she is keeping herself concealed, of course. If you know——"

"Since you have made yourself acquainted with the history of Cobbville people, you ought to know that Miss Williams has gone to visit in Little Rock," said the other rudely.

Keeneyes looked at the old man.

"Mr. Caldwell," said Uncle Nuzzer with hesitation, "I done found out dat Miss Sallie never been down dar a-tall. It all a mistake 'bout her going down dar to visit her frien'. She never go to Little Rock."

"Never went?" cried the young man, as pale as death. "What makes you think so?"

"'Cause a gem'man friend' of mine, a very ersponsible niggah, done come to town and say she never dah."

"That gentleman friend of yours!" cried Caldwell scornfully.

"Yes, sah, but he wuk for de fambly dat Miss Sallie say she visiting. And he oughter know; and he do know, sah. She never been dar."

"Then where is she?" asked the young man, coming across the walk, and grasping the old man's arm. "Where is she?"

"Dat what I don't know, and dat what dis gentleman going to find out."

"Oh!" cried Caldwell with heat. "Then that is why you came to town, is it?"

"It's none of your affair why I came," was the rather angry retort. "But perhaps that's why I mean to stay in town."

"It is my affair, if it concerns Miss Williams," said the young man, "for I tell you she is my friend."

"Do you mean you and she are engaged to be married?"

"Well, perhaps I do mean that," said Caldwell, coolly.

"Oh," said the detective, "in that case it is your business, certainly, to find out where she is."

"I think so, indeed," said the other decidedly.

"And you have no idea?"

"She must be visiting her friend in Little Rock; she wrote after she reached there; and last week wrote again."

"From Little Rock?"

"Certainly."

The negro interposed vehemently. "But Miss Sallie never been dar never a-tall."

"How long since you heard this?"

"Just today, sah."

"You haven't told Mr. and Mrs. Williams have you?" Caldwell asked with eager intensity.

"Of course I done tole 'em, sah."

"Good heavens!" muttered Caldwell.

Keeneyes looked at him narrowly.

Caldwell roused himself with an effort and asked:

"What did they think about it?"

"They didn't seem to think nothing, sah; dat what's so cur'us."

"What did they do when you told them?"

"Dey didn't do nothing."

"Did they seem scared?"

"No, sah."

"Were they angry?"

"Dey was just as peaceabe as lambs, sah. Dey just kinder turned it off, and tole me to mine my businesses."

"I see," said Caldwell, in relief; "they didn't believe your story; they know their daughter is in Little Rock."

"No sah, I think dey b'lieved my story all right; dey just seemed dat dey didn't keer one way or another 'bout it."

"But if their daughter isn't where they thought she was, they would be frightened to death," muttered Caldwell.

"I'll find that daughter," remarked Keeneyes, easily. "And since she is engaged to you, Mr. Caldwell, perhaps, you'd like to help me in the search. That is, if you want her found."

"Want her found? How can I help wanting her found?"

"You don't seem very anxious," remarked Keeneyes.

"I am anxious," was the angry retort. "I am dying of anxiety!"

Keeneyes laughed. "Dying of anxiety? Well, you'll linger on a long time, if you don't get it worse than you have it now."

Caldwell's manner became threatening. "What do you insinuate, sir?"

"Oh," said the other genially, "I think you know where Miss Sallie is."

"I know?" cried the other in a fury, as he doubled up his fist. "Do you understand that you accuse me of concealing her whereabouts? That is an insult. Retract your words, or it will be the worse for you!" And he stepped closer, as if to aim a blow at the detective's head.

CHAPTER IX.
THE OPEN DOOR.

Keeneyes on finding himself threatened, rose quickly. But he was as cool as young Caldwell was angry, and the more the other blustered, the deeper became the detective's serenity.

"Are you going to strike me?" Keeneyes asked, as if with no personal interest in the other's decision.

The question was so unusual, and was asked in such a scientific spirit, that the other paused abruptly.

"I don't believe," Caldwell declared, "that you care whether I punch your head as it deserves or not. If you are a man, defend yourself." And he raised his arm again, to deliver a blow; but the detective made no movement to shield his threatened head. He was so cheerful, so calm and so alertly interested, that Caldwell found his anger vanishing.

"What sort of a man are you, anyway?" cried Caldwell, impatiently.

"I am an investigator."

"Maybe you want to investigate the strength of my muscle," said the young man fiercely. "If so, you'll be given ample opportunity to measure it."

"It is not so important how hard you can strike, as whether you can strike at all, under the circumstances."

"Under what circumstances, sir?"

"Under the circumstances that have made you angry," said Keeneyes.

"I am angry because you insulted me."

"Precisely so, Mr. Caldwell. As you say, I insulted you. But it would make rather a curious story if I told why you were insulted."

"In what way do you mean?"

"Why, my dear young man, you are insulted for no reason on earth except that I offered to find the missing Miss Sallie Williams who is your affianced sweetheart. Since it insults you to suggest that I am going to hunt for her, that indicates that you don't want her found——"

"It is false! I am insulted because you tell me to my face that I know where she is—as if I had her hidden away somewhere!"

"We waste time," said Keeneyes, waving his arm. "I ask you for the last time if you mean to join with me in the search!"

"I cannot co-operate with a scoundrel in any matter," said Caldwell fiercely.

"Meaning me by 'scoundrel,' if you please, sir?" asked Keeneyes meekly.

"I mean whoever'll take it," said the young man turning to his gate, and entering his yard.

"I'll take it," called Keeneyes. "Thank you for the gift. It means much to me, sir."

Caldwell without a word, went into his big new house, slamming the door violently behind him.

"Now, Uncle Nuzzer," said Keeneyes turning to the old negro, "I must tell you what I want you to do."

"Yes, sah; what is it, sah?"

"I want you to employ me regularly as your detective, to find Miss Sallie Williams."

"How you mean, sah? I ain't got no money for to pay you, sah."

"You can pay me in work. You see clearly that Miss Sallie's sweetheart doesn't want her found; and you tell me that her father and stepmother show no interest in her whereabouts."

"Dat true, sah; 'pears lak nobody but ole Uncle Nuzzer am anxious 'bout dat chile."

"Very good. Then you employ me. As a private citizen I can't act as freely as a detective. You can pay me in work."

"I be mighty glad, sah——"

"Very well, that's settled. And now, if you want the young lady found, you must do exactly what I tell you, without asking any questions."

"Yes, sah," said the old man eagerly, "I do dat, sah."

"Very good. Then you go back to your ordinary occupations, and leave me to my search. When I need you, I'll let you know."

The old man went away rather doubtfully. He was genuinely attached to Miss Williams, and he did not think the detective had been very successful in the interview with Caldwell.

Keeneyes, as usual, was highly satisfied with his own part.

He did not return to the hotel, after parting from Uncle Nuzzer, but roamed the country roads till it was dark. After nightfall, he found a secluded nook among the Ozark Hills, and lay upon the thin grass enjoying the balmy air and the open heavens above him. It was for this that he had come to Arkansas, and it was with a sincere sigh of regret that he at last arose.

He felt it his duty to go to work. A flash from a match told him that it was eleven o'clock. He left the hills and returned to Cobbville.

Instead of going to the hotel, he followed the street that led past Caldwell's mansion. At the gate he paused. It opened without sound. He entered the yard. The night was intensely dark. The air was fragrant with spring roses.

Keeneyes stole to the front door and tried it; it was locked. This pleased him, because it was just as he had expected. He slipped around the house, trying the windows as he went; all of them were secured.

He came to a small side porch; feeling his way along the wall, he found that the side door was not only unfastened, but stood ajar. He crept into the house. No light was burning.

CHAPTER X.
THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.

On finding himself inside the strange house in absolute darkness, Keeneyes took every step with the utmost caution. Not a sound was to be heard.

Why had the side door been left standing open, when all the other outside doors and all the windows were so carefully fastened? Even the screen door at the side porch stood wide open.

It was so dark that the detective could not discover what sort of an apartment he was in, except by feeling about; for though the room had several windows, all of them were jealously guarded by shutters. As there was no moon, and the sky was clouded, it was dark enough outdoors; but in Caldwell's big new house, the darkness was impenetrable.

The detective carried with him, according to custom, his dark-lantern, but he hesitated to push back the slide.

Experience guided him as he felt his way gropingly. From the room, which proved to be a diningroom, he made his way into a sittingroom.

Then came a hall, and at the foot of the hall, the staircase.

At each step the detective paused to listen.

Nothing was to be heard, not even the ticking of a clock.

Keeneyes began to ascend the stairs.

The stairs were carpeted, and his cautious footsteps made no noise.

He reached a hall above, and after again listening intently, he ventured upon one brief flashing of his lantern.

Having thus become master of the situation, so far as the location of various doors were concerned, he went to one room after another. All the rooms on the left of the upstairs hall proved to be entirely empty and uncarpeted.

The first room on the right was large and handsome, but was used simply as a storeroom. It was filled with miscellaneous furniture, all of which was new, some of which was uncrated. There was so much of this furniture that the room suggested a sort of furniture store.

Doubtless Caldwell had purchased the chairs and tables, the beds and dressers, upon the supposition that he would marry Sallie Williams and go to housekeeping with her in this building.

Now Sallie Williams had disappeared, and this building was for sale.

At least, Caldwell had said it was for sale.

And yet he had refused to sell it to Keeneyes.

Why was that?

Had he imagined that Keeneyes was joking in offering to give him $7,000 for the place?

Possibly.

If all this furniture had been bought that Caldwell and his intended bride might go to housekeeping, it seemed strange that Caldwell should take the disappearance of Miss Williams so oddly.

He had not seemed glad because she was gone, but he had not shown anguish of spirit. He had said he was in despair. But he had not looked despairing. Keeneyes passed to the next room, and having assured himself that nobody was within, he turned on the light for a brief glimpse. That quick flash revealed a scene to surprise the trained detective.

He was in a diningroom of the daintiest coziest description. There was a table for two; on it was a service for two; there were chairs for two.

Why this diningroom upstairs, when there was a diningroom on the first floor? Above all, why a diningroom for two?

Keeneyes went to the last room on the second floor. It was a bedroom and women's garments were to be seen. The dresser suggested the occupancy of a lady. There was a man's hat on the table. It was Caldwell's hat; Keeneye's remembered it distinctly.

At the foot of the bed were two dainty slippers. They could not possibly be Caldwell's slippers.

Keeneyes would have liked to examine the room more thoroughly, but he dared not prolong the gleam of his dark lantern.

He had assured himself that there was nobody in the house.

But the open condition of the side door had suggested that somebody might be in the flower-garden.

Possibly two somebodies.

Keeneyes hastily picked up one of the dainty slippers, thrust it into his pocket, and stole from the room.

At that moment, he heard a faint sound from below. Somebody was closing and locking the side door. Then steps were

SONG.

When the skylark shakes the dew from his wings
And mounts through gloaming fires,
His tremulous evensong to sing
For the sun that burns the spires,
He pours his song like sacred wine
For a god we cannot see,
Where myriad altar candles shine
Unknown to such as we.

When the child at dawn looks out on the world
And finds the fields all white
With scattered cobwebs, dew impearled
The spinnings of a night---
He laughs to see in little things
A heaven we cannot know;
For these are drift from angels' wings,
A paradisial snow.

heard softly ascending the staircase.

Keeneyes darted into the storeroom and waited, that whoever the intruder might be, he would pass on.

Steps came nearer, but always guardedly.

Presently Keeneyes heard somebody whisper, "Good night!"

Keeneyes tilted his head to listen the better, that he might be sure whether or not a kiss were bestowed.

He heard the kiss.

Keeneyes bowed solemnly in the darkness, with much satisfaction.

Hearing that kiss was to him precisely the same as finding a missing bone in a murder case. It evoked no glow of sentimentality.

Somebody went to the bedroom, entered it, and turned the key.

Somebody else went back to the first floor, and passed out of the side door, locking it behind him, and of coure carrying off the key.

It suddenly occurred to Keeneyes that he might find some difficulty in making his escape from the house. He crept down stairs. All the doors had been locked from the outside.

He went to the windows, and was puzzled. They were fastened securely, but he could not find any lock.

He did not like the thought of breaking the glass, in order to get to the shutter-fastenings, but there seemed no other way.

It was because Keeneyes was a detective, that he delayed this heroic treatment of the windows. It stood to reason that since they were fastened, there must be fasteners; or if locked, there must be locks.

If there were locks, why couldn't he find them?

Keeneyes consumed a good deal of time in his futile search; nothing was to be discovered, to account for the immovability of the windowsashes.

There seemed nothing to do but to break a pane; but that would make noise; and the jagged edges of a broken pane are always dangerous. Keeneyes reflected that there were still hours of nighttime; no need to be in a hurry.

In the darkness, he perched upon a window-sill, drew his knees up in his arms, and meditated upon that midnight kiss.

If Caldwell had been at one side of that kiss, who had been at the other? Caldwell's hat upon the table in the bedroom, naturally suggested Caldwell. Was the lady the missing Miss Sallie Williams? If so, she was evidently a willing captive. Keeneyes mused profoundly.

Suddenly he was startled from his musings; at first, he hardly knew why. Then a sound was repeated and he knew it had been occurring for some time, though so faint, and seemingly so far away, that for a time he had given it no heed.

It came from the front of the house. Keeneyes softly descended from the window-sill and went toward this sound. It suggested a mouse. But mice do not play in keyholes. This sound was in the keyhole of the front door. Somebody was trying to fit a key to the lock.

Keeneyes rubbed his hands as he listened. He was intensely interested. This newcomer could not be Caldwell, else he would not be trying one key after another in experimental fashion.

Suppose the lady in the bedroom upstair was Miss Sallie Williams.

And take for granted that the man who had kissed her good night was her lover, young Caldwell.

In that case, her hiding in the big house was doubtless entirely agreeable to both parties.

In the little romance there seemed no place for a third person. Yet here was evidently a third person, determined to unlock the door and take some sort of part in the drama.

Who could it be, and what part was to be played?

That would presently be known.

At any rate, whoever opened the door would give Keeneyes the mean of getting out.

He waited breathlessly.

CHAPTER XI.

AT DEAD OF NIGHT.

At last there was the sound of a key turning in the lock.

Keeneyes had stepped behind a portiere, in case the intruder should strike light. The precaution was well taken. The front door was pushed softly open. Some one stepped with infinite precaution across the threshold, and entered the hall. The front door was again closed. Not only so, but the detective heard the key turned in the lock.

Then a match was struck.

Keeneyes did not venture to peep from behind the folds of the curtain, lest the movement of his hand attract attention.

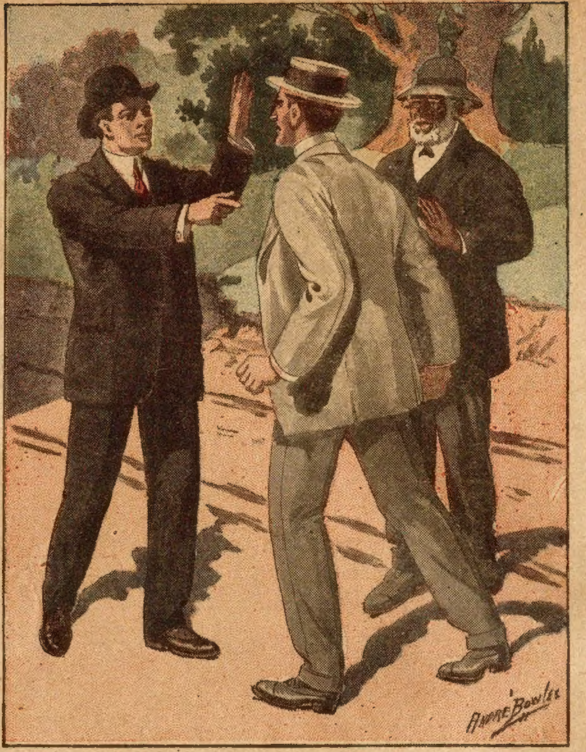
Some one was breathing close to his elbow. Then this mysterious visitor passed by.

The light was blown out, and when the detective peered forth, nothing was visible save a single spark glowing against space, and a faint view of three fingers still holding the end of the match. The fingers were slender, and on one was a diamond. It was a lady's hand.

Keeneyes followed the sound of moving footsteps to the base of the staircase. Then the rustle of a dress was heard upon the steps.

The detective slipped from his hiding-place, and followed.

In the darkness, the unknown lady went up the stairs, and in the darkness, the agile detective secretly followed.



"That is an insult!"

The hall was reached on the second story.

The unknown lady paused, and the detective, guessing that she was about to strike another match, crouched on the stairs. The light was struck and the unknown paused, looking from door to door.

Keeneyes watched her, though in some danger of being discovered.

The lady examined the hall, and suddenly her eyes were attracted by a small white object flattened upon the floor.

It was a lady's handkerchief, lying before the door of the bedroom in which Miss Sallie Williams, or the person the detective guessed to be Miss Williams, was even now sleeping.

The mysterious caller having spied out this handkerchief, blew out the match, and stole down the hall to the bedroom.

Keeneyes straightened, and after an instant's hesitation, came up into the hall and followed.

The other reached the bedroom door, and the detective heard her try the doorknob. The door was locked.

The lady knocked upon the door. There was absolute silence. The lady knocked again. Nothing was to be heard but the echo of this knock which sounded strangely in the deserted house.

The lady called: "Sallie!"

This call settled it, in the mind of the detective, that the inmate of the bedroom, she who had kissed young Caldwell good night, was the missing Miss Sallie Williams.

From the interior of the bedroom came a startled gasp.

"Sallie!" the lady again called. "Open this door! It will be best for you. I have found you, and if you don't want me to betray you, you must see me!"

Light came from under the door, indicating that the inmate had lighted her lamp. Then the door was opened, and by its light the detective could see the lady enter from the hall.

He recognized her. She was the banker's wife, the same who had invited him to ride with her, that she might find out why he had come to town, and that she might threaten him in order to drive him away.

There was no doubt of it: the newcomer was Sallie Williams' stepmother.

She entered the room, and the door was closed behind her.

Keeneyes waited a very long time. He could hear the murmur of voices; but though he applied his ear to the keyhole after the legitimate and time-honored custom of detectives not one word could he catch except of Sallie Williams to her stepmother's charge:

"I didn't get them. I don't know anything about them. I tell you I didn't get them."

Miss Sallie Williams said these words a good many times, which showed that her stepmother, a good many times, was accusing her of "getting them" or knowing where "they" were.

Besides this, Keeneyes learned from the stepmother's tone that she was angry; and from the stepdaughter's tone that she was frightened.

At last the lady came out of the room, and Keeneyes who had anticipated her, and was upon the staircase, heard her say:

"Very well, Miss Sallie, very well! I will give you until tomorrow night to think it over; and then if you refuse to tell me, I'll betray you, I'll publish you to the world.

And with these intemperate words, she groped her way along the hall, calling:

"No, I don't want a light! I want nothing from you but information, which you refuse to give."

Miss Williams called after her: "But I don't know where they are!"

Mrs. Williams gave an angry click with her tongue, and went on.

Keeneyes reached the front hall, and intended to go out first, thus making his escape.

He was somewhat disconcerted to find that Mrs. Williams, after locking the door, had carried the key away with her. Why had she done such an unnecessary thing? The detective was angry. It ought to have been enough for her to lock herself in. Now that she had the key, how was he to leave the house without making himself known to the owner of it?

The lady was near the door. She paused to strike a match to be sure of her surroundings, and this time the detective made no movement to conceal himself.

Thus it was the lady's attention was claimed, not by the door she sought, but by the slim black figure which stood in front of it. The lady uttered a faint scream and dropped the match.

"Allow me," said Keeneyes, turning on the light of his dark-lantern. "Matches are made so cheaply nowadays," he added politely, "that they do not do the work they once did."

She shrank back against the wall, as she faltered, "Who are you?"

"I believe we have met before," he answered, pleasantly.

She recognized him and was afraid. "What are you doing here, Mr. Zellers?" she gasped.

"Like you," he answered, "I'm merely seeing the sights."

"But what do you want?" she asked, fearfully.

"I want to get out," he explained, "and you have thoughtlessly carried away the key. Will you kindly unlock the door?"

CHAPTER XXII.

DIAMONDS.

They made a strange picture in the front hall of the silent house.

The shaft of light from the dark-lantern was directed upon the door, and its light illuminated more or less the surrounding space. Mrs. Williams was revealed in crouching attitude, seeking instinctively to avoid discovery. Keeneyes, holding the dark lantern, stood tall and erect, his eyes fixed upon the shrinking banker's wife. There was an instant's pause.

Then the woman straightened up, and said in a tone of guarded defiance, "What have you discovered in this house?"

"You have assumed that I've made discoveries," said Keeneyes. "As a matter of fact, I was desperately anxious to get out of here when you came. Kindly unlock the door."

"Have you been upstairs?"

"What stairs?"

"Answer me," she returned, haughtily. "Have you found anybody in this house?"

"Yourself, madam. Are you about to explain why you are here? I beg you not to do so. In that case you might feel it your right to interrogate me. I don't know why you are here. You don't know why I'm here. It is just."

Mrs. Williams unlocked the door with an agitated hand. The detective followed her swiftly from the house.

"Shall you lock up?" he asked with interest.

Without replying, she locked the door behind her, and traversed the yard. Keeneyes went slightly behind her, all the way, till the gate was passed.

On the walk, she suddenly stopped. It was still intensely dark, but he fancied he could see the gleam in her eyes, as she turned upon him.

Mr. Zellers, I demand an explanation of your presence in that house."

"The jewelry explains it," answered the detective, easily.

The lady gave a quick exclamation "Good heavens!" she muttered, "you know even that!"

"Do you not think it just," asked Keeneyes, a trifle eagerly, "that I should be rather celebrated as a detective?" He seemed much pleased.

"But how did you know about the diamonds?" she asked fiercely.

"Madam," said the other, gravely, "the hour is late and we should not be seen thus together. It doesn't look well. Now, as for myself, I care precious little for appearances. I know, in the true inwardness of the matter, that you care as little for me as I do for you. In short you hate me, and I have no sort of opinion of you, madam, which is quite fair, you will say. You mistrust me, and I mistrust you. Nevertherless, should people pass and see us thus, in apparently friendly conversation——"

"When will you meet me to discuss the diamonds?" she asked abruptly.

"Do you wish to discuss them with me?"

"Do I wish it? Good heavens, you know very well that I must!"

"Oh, if you feel that way about it! Well, let me see; how would tomorrow at ten, suit you? I will be loitering in front of this house. If you are out driving, you might invite me to a seat, as you did before."

"Very well."

She turned away, then suddenly paused to ask: "But you will not return to that house, will you?"

"You mean the house we have just left? My dear Mrs. Williams, why should I enter a house I was so anxious to leave?"

That is no answer."

"Moreover," said Keeneyes, "I have no key."

"You do not reply, sir; you may be able to get in without a key."

"I assure you I have no other way."

"Mr. Zellers, answer me!" she said imperiously. "Do you mean to go back there?"

"My dear Mrs. Williams, it stands to reason that I do not mean to go back to a house that is vacant, to pass the night. Certaintly not."

"Why do you say 'a house that is vacant?'" she asked suspiciously.

"I was afraid you might think somebody was in there, madam."

"Somebody? Who? What do you mean?"

"My dear Mrs. Williams, for your own sake, believe me, only for your own sake, I am obliged to terminate this interview. I shall not go back to Caldwell's house, and I take it, that the word of Keeneyes is to be depended upon. Good night. Good-by until tomorrow, at ten."

Keeneyes walked swiftly away.

As for the lady, she slipped quietly down a side street, and in due time gained the mansion where she supposed her husband was sound asleep.

When she went to her room, she was surprised to find that the banker was not there. The clock struck twelve, as she made this discovery. It was such an unusual thing for her husband to be absent at midnight, at least without having given her warning, that she stood chilled by vague fears.

What had become of her husband is now to be explained.

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very strange happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. Every family should take the Ledger, as humor and stories and pictures make life brighter and pleasanter for all, bringing health and entertainment and doing every one good. Be wise and attend to this today.

* * *

Even when a woman faces a mirror she may be blind to her imperfections

THE HOWARD MYSTERY

By J. Greenman Howser

THE superintendent looked at me squarely. He had gone to some length in giving me the details of the case and now put it up to me to decide. He seemed pretty certain of my answer, or he would not have explained many things which were known only to three or four of the officials of the road.

I glanced sharply at him. Here was I, John Hart, detective in secret, who never had been known to any one in my true character, save Thomas Hardy, the man who sat facing me, and three other men. These men occupied official positions with their several railroads, the same as Hardy did with the W. C. L.

I never had a case in the ten years of my detective experience except those I had handled for these four men, and I have been kept on the jump continually.

Superintendent Hardy had given me the facts in the case and they were few enough. Boiled down they were as follows:

Lee Howard, a semi-official of the W. C. L., had disappeared. The railroad telegraphers had gone out on strike and it was a hard thing to get men with enough skill to act as train dispatchers, more especially when great centers of freight traffic required that trains should be kept on the move.

Howard, who was an old operator, offered his services to his road to help out in this great emergency, and had been sent to Coaltar, a town very small on the map, but the location of great switch yards and several railroad crossings.

Trains were made up and sent out in every direction, and the train dispatcher must sure understand his busines to hold down the job. Reports had come in every day of train after train being wrecked, many of them before leaving the switch yards, and the officials were well nigh distracted.

It was at this point that Howard had offered to take charge of the Coaltar office. Knowing he was very reliable, the superintendent and the rest of them jumped at his offer and changed their worry spot.

Nothing more was heard of Coaltar, which was a good sign. Then two weeks later, a call came to the superintendent's office saying Howard had left, and to send some one to take his place quick.

Then began a regular procession of men, operators, near operators, and no operators, to Coaltar, but one after another proved his inability and reported back. That job was too stiff for them.

I had worked in the same office under Howard in the East, and knew that it meant something when day after day went by and he made no report at headquarters. He was of different stuff from that.

Hardy sent down a plainclothes man to get details of Howard and the lay of the land as to his boarding house, associates, and the general situation. I didn't want to appear too nosy, or as anything but a telegrapher trying to hold down a very difficult position. I could do that without much effort, but the chief feature was to find Howard or what had become of him.

There were complications at the start. It was at first suggested that the strikers had made way with him, but we abandoned that theory at once.

So, late in the afternoon, more than two weeks after Howard was reported missing, I dropped off the train at Coaltar and took a look around. I had a diagram of every spot likely to be traveled by Howard. I determined to take charge in the morning instead of immediately. This would be about the only time I could show curiosity or ask questions about the town, but of course, never a word did I mention of the missing man.

I found out from the operator that I could get board with an Italian family upon the hillside. In fact all the operators, off and on, had boarded there. I went to the house at once to make arrangements. It was of two stories in the front, but shelved back into one story at the back, the rear door opening flush with the ground.

Coaltar has a settlement of Poles, Hungarians, and Russians, with a very small number of Italians. These men worked in the coal mines which were owned by the W. C. L. They were a rough lot, constantly fighting among themselves; but as long as they kept away from the town proper, they were left to follow their own particular ideas and pleasures of life. The railroad tracks were acknowledged as the dividing line between these aliens and Coaltar proper. No stranger who was wise ever wandered over to the miners' side of the track, but the switch yards were entirely in their territory, while the depot was a quarter of a mile to the north. The train dispatcher's office was between the miners' huts and the depot, near enough for the train men to get their orders, but not in the depot building. This had been the arrangement before the office had become so important and never had been changed.

The house occupied by the Italian family on the hill was well known to me before I arrived. I carried a diagram of each mode of ingress or egress and every detail obtainable by the detectives, but all this was exterior; so when I rapped at the door to apply for board I knew nothing of its interior. The comely young Italian woman and I soon came to terms, and I was installed in the room formerly occupied by the missing man.

No trace of him was visible, no trunk or lighter baggage, as everything had disappeared with his going.

I walked about after supper, looking the situation over, and found that while there was nothing interesting to see, I was the center of observation of many of the rougher men. They are always suspicious of every stranger and paid me marked attention until they learned I was the new operator, when they immediately lost interest.

While I sat smoking and talking to the young fellow I was to relieve, I noticed a bright Italian boy about fifteen who hovered around, seeming bent on hearing every word. He was a nice, pleasant lad, "picking up the business," as the operator said.

I sat at the table in the office during a lull in our talk and wrote a letter to Hardy, giving him a synopsis of events since I came, handing it to the young fellow to deliver to the superintendent when he reported at headquarters the next day.

As he put the letter in his inside pocket, I happened to turn. I saw a flash in the eyes of the Italian boy and I wondered at it. While I did not think of him as a possible enemy, my instinct makes me suspicious of every one. Well, I took charge of the office the next morning, and for a time there was work a-plenty; but after a few hours things reached their normal and I began to look for the straws to determine the direction of the wind. Then the gleam in the boy's eyes came to my mind. What it was I could not tell—something had made me arrive at several conclusions; they might be wrong, but until something better showed up they were a basis to work from.

First of all there was the boy. I tried to talk to him, but he spoke very brokenly, palms up; yet I had heard him talk understandingly, the night before, with the telegraph operator.

The second thing was that, while I was sending a message direct to Hardy, I saw the boy with pencil and paper taking it down, and he didn't skip a word of it either. But as Hardy and I always used a code of our own, what he learned would be little enough, as it was only about sending some fruit, the particular kind I wanted, being Messina oranges.

The boy might have been wiser if he had known I had sent for an assistant who was waiting for a word from me to follow me to Coaltar. Also he was the Italian detective who had been one of the secret police in Italy.

Then I decided to find out what the lad knew, if anything. So I wrote out a message and sent him to a distant part of the town. I knew he could not get back under two hours, as it was a long walk.

When he was gone I went over the whole building from garret to basement and there, under the floor of the telegraph office, concealed in an old disused coal-bin, was the Italian boy. Worse yet, the cramped quarters and stuffy air had been too much for him, and he was sound asleep.

Sticking out of his bosom, for he had opened the neck of his shirt, was a letter. It looked very familiar, and having no scruples on the subject I pulled it far enough into the light to see clearly. Sure enough, it was the letter I had written to Hardy and given to the operator to deliver.

Things began to look up a little. I left the letter where it was, and contented myself to wait for results as to my message, for the boy was supposed to bring back a reply. Another hour passed after my discovery as to the whereabouts of the boy. I sat where I could see any one either coming or going to the coal-bin; and then out from the string of freights standing near, came a man, an Italian, who looked sharply up at the windows and darted below. In a moment the boy came running up the stairs and laid the reply to the message on the table. He breathed heavily as though from running and threw himself wearily into a chair. At last I had a peg to hang something on. Why was all this small trickery? Just as the boy had reached the sidewalk on his way to dinner, the telegraph instrument began calling my office. Looking out of the window before I answered the call I saw Luigi dart into the coal-bin and could almost hear him breathing as he took down the message, for I had arranged two small mirrors in such a way that the hole he crawled into was in plain view. These mirrors reflected him many times in the next few days.

Not a message went out or was received that was missed by him. During office hours he was supposed to run errands and take his pay in learning the business, but I soon learned that that was only a bluff. I figured it out that there was some particular information they were waiting for or expecting, or they were suspicious of me, but I soon put the latter out of my mind.

I knew the Italian detective had arrived, and we had exchanged signals at a distance. So one evening he came into the office while the boy was copying messages. A swift look passed between the two Italians and then blankness of face. At first I thought we had been fooled in our detective but I need not have feared. The detective asked if a message had come for him, and then went out, saying he would come back tomorrow.

That night a code message came from Hardy. Luigi sat listening to it all and didn't take the trouble to write it out, as it related only to the movement of certain cars. Hardy's message said to hurry through forty cars of perishable stuff from California. There would be

---

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* * *

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Mr. Greatmann—Eh? There is nothing the matter with me.

Stranger—Strange! Everybody I met told me to come here at once and cure you.

Mr. Greatmann—There must be some mistake. I am Chief Factotum of the board of health.

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* * *

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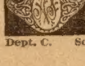

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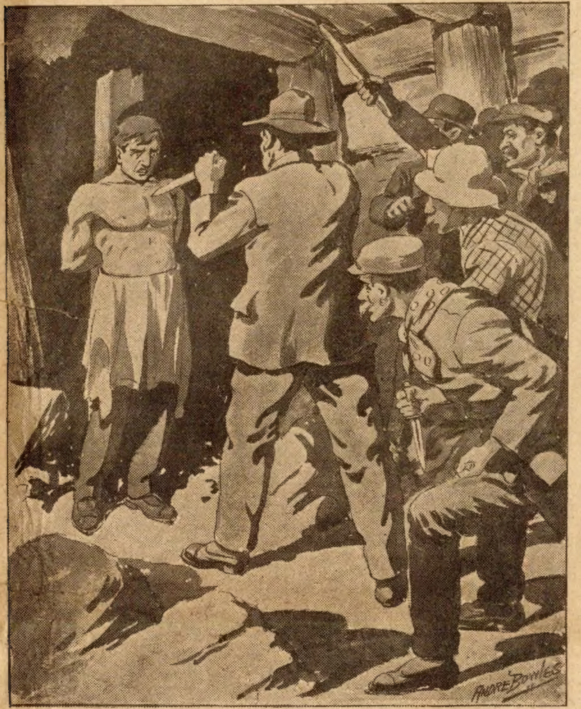

Italians surrounded a man who was manacled.

two more trains within twenty-four hours, and to hurry them to their destination to the exclusion of all other freight, etc.

Luigi laughed and smacked his lips as if he wished he could have just a little of that fruit, and Giovanni, the detective who had come in for the message that never came, stormed and swore softly in Italian and broken English that he would have revenge on his compatriots that kept him waiting.

The code message really said that that morning an Italian had presented at the Central bank four checks, amounting in all to $40,000, being all the cash held in the name of Lee Howard. The check was signed by Howard, there was no doubt of that; and that two more detectives, as miners, would be in Coaltar tonight.

I took out my diagram of the inside of the house on the hillside, again carefully located each door and window, and passed it on to Giovanni under cover of a lighted match. As it grew late in the day the very air seemed full of events. The boy kept going out and coming in so softly he got on my nerves, and I asked him what was the matter? I told him to stay either out or in the office, I didn't care which, but that I was tired of his restlessness. For I knew, since the message had come, that it was time to take down from the peg I had driven in on the first day the whole batch of things that were planned, and that there would be lively times before another day dawned.

I came back after supper, and while I sat listening to every sound on the walk outside, my hand rested on the butt of a gun lying on my knee, while its mate was in my coat pocket. For I was not the only one in danger. Luigi had completely disappeared. Everything that belonged to him was gone, too, and I sat waiting, for things were shaping themselves outside.

I turned away from the table and walked back and forth waiting for a signal. As I looked from a window toward the house on the hill, the papers on my desk rustled as though blown by the wind; then a slender hand reached from the window near the table and quickly took the message that lay on top of the pile, but Luigi would be disappointed, as the one received in his absence was in ashes on the floor. I had lighted my pipe with it ten minutes before. I crossed to the lamp and turned it out and waited, once more looking toward the hill.

Suddenly a match flickered and went out, another sputtered and went out, while a third burned up brightly as a cigar was lit, and the match thrown carelessly on the ground. I knew they were ready and waiting.

I had walked only a short distance toward my boarding place, when two evil-looking men, miners, followed me. All the time they came closer, then one snarled out an oath—the one we had agreed on—and I knew they were the two detectives who had received minute instructions as to their duty for the night. Giovanni had coached them well.

As I gained my room, I turned up my lamp, leaving my curtain up as usual, took off my coat, pulled down my shades and prepared for business. My dark-lantern was ready, guns and cartridges right and in place. I put out the light and as I did so I turned as Giovanni pushed the cupboard aside and stood in the opening. I lay down on the bed. The Italian sat by the door. Soon there came a scratching on the wall. Giovanni stepped through the opening and there were four of us to solve the disappearance of Howard. The thing had been traced down to a working basis, and they were there ready to finish the job.

Each of us had been several times in the abandoned mine, against a chamber of which the house was built. I had a theory that Howard was in the mine, held for ransom, but no one had been approached until the checks on the Central bank had been presented yesterday morning. So now we were willing to take chances of finding him, as it was evident things had arrived at a crisis and the money was in the hands of some one who would act quickly.

Giovanni took the lead. We did not know which way to go, but four together could put up a pretty good fight if it came to that. We followed close upon his heels. The darkness was intense. Each had his lantern, but we were afraid to show more than a glimmer now and then. We had gone farther into the mine, walking possibly five hundred feet, when a scream of agony seemed to spring from under our very feet. Looking hurriedly about, we discovered reflections of light through a hole in the floor, which seemed to give into a lower gallery of the mine. As we crowded around the hole the scream sounded a second time. The four of us, with guns cocked, gazed down on the scene below.

Seven Italians surrounded a man who was manacled to a post set in the ground. His hair was matted and his face drawn and white. The Italians had tied him so his arms were pulled back and his breast thrown forward and bare. The one called Malesta taunted him with being a fool. He only promised to release him till he got the check signed, he said. They had drawn the money yesterday and were going back to Italy, but first they would revenge themselves on Howard whose information had caused him, Malesta, and his band to serve those three deadly years in prison. As soon as they were released, Malesta and his men had banded together for revenge and money, and they had both. As the gang drew closer to the prisoner the light from the torch stuck in the wall fell on the knife held in the hand of each. As Malesta finished his talk, he drew his knife lightly across the breast of the struggling man saying, "It is so I wipe out my account."

We had been so absorbed by the scene that we did not realize what Malesta had in his mind to do until too late, but when the next Italian reached out his hand to follow the action of his chief, a fusilade of bullets was started by the detectives, and every shot told.

The bandit chief was the first to fall, and as he pitched forward on his face, the bag of gold with which he had taunted the prisoner broke open, and gold rained upon the forms of the prostrate Italians. The effect was so successful that only one head was raised, and then a hand slid for the knife and greedily reached for the gold. Once more, without a shadow of mercy, the detectives discharged their weapons.

The next thing we had to do was to find a way to reach the chamber in the mine where Howard and the seven dead men were concealed. We feared to wait too long before rescuing him, so I sent two of the men back to the house for a rope.

They soon returned, and two of the men went down into the mine by way of the hole. An opening connecting it with the house was soon found, and Howard was carried there, the woman protesting at his removal. But when she made a visit to the mine and saw what had happened to the whole gang, she and the boy, Luigi, picked up two of the bags of gold and disappeared completely.

The rest is easy to tell. Howard had been drugged and taken into the mine. He had been brutally treated in every way, but nothing done to injure him vitally, till he had signed a check for all the money he had in the bank. Most of it was recovered, each dead man having his share after Malesta had taken one-half.

It took months for Howard again to engage in business, and it is doubtful whether he ever will be again his old strong self. Even if he should, he will always wear the scar on his breast where Malesta wiped out his account.

* * *

Trial By Water.

Throwing people into the water to let it determine their innocence or guilt was widely in use in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A synod of West Prussia forbade its use in 1745. Sporadic cases, however, occurred during the whole of the nineteenth century.

Prof. E. P. Evans wrote in 1895 of its use in Dalmatia, where in some districts it was still customary to throw all the women into the water on a specified day to see whether they would sink or swim.

A rope was attached to each in order to save from drowning those who proved their innocence by sinking, while those believed to be guilty because they floated were also rescued and made to promise to forsake their evil ways on pain of being stoned.

A traveler has described a modern survival of the ordeal used in detecting thieves in southern Russia. All the servants of the household where the robbery occurred were assembled and as many balls of bread were made as there were suspected persons.

A sorceress then addressed each one of the number, saying that the particular ball of bread which she held in her hand would sink or swim as the party addressed was guilty or innocent. She then flung it into the water.

Boiling water was used in ordeals by the Persians and it is referred to in the Avesta. It contained both the sacred elements, water and fire, suggesting the deluge past and the fiery doom of the future.

In the simplest form of the hot water test the bare arm was plunged to the wrist in trivial cases, and to the elbow in more serious trials, usually to bring out rings or coins thrown therein.

In Tibet plaintiff and defendant settle their cause judicially by plunging their arms into boiling water containing a black and white stone, when he who brings up the white stone wins the verdict.

A king of the Goths in the seventh century, with the sanction of the council of Toledo, recommended the boiling test for crime.

* * *

Unchanged.

"I met Dunkey today for the first time for years. He hasn't changed much."

"Oh, he hasn't changed at all, but he doesn't seem to realize it."

"How do you mean?"

"Oh, he's forever talking about what a fool he used to be."

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THE LUCK OF GREGORY;

Or, A Rocky Road to Fortune

By JULIAN F. DARROW

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CHAPTER XII.

A STORMY NIGHT.

SOMEHOW, Bob seemed easier in his mind after he had placed that picture so that when he chanced to cast his eyes aloft he looked only upon the back of it; for according to his way of thinking the original had been the cause of embittering the last few years in his grandfather's life, and if one could only follow her course since that day it would be found to be strewn with wrecks. She made him think of the sirens that were said to lure poor seamen to their doom in the waters of the Ægean Sea, beautiful and enticing, but like Dead Sea fruit.

He spent an unusual time in making his preparations for this night, and yet if the fact had been brought to his attention Bob would have still declared that he had no belief in signs or warnings or premonitions, though actions often speak louder than words.

One thing he had been doing for several days past, and that was practicing the art of revolver shooting. His feeling of not being prepared at the time of the other alarm weighed so upon his mind that he had asked Jason about it, and by that young worthy been directed to a gallery where he met a professor whose name was famous in the annals of pistol magic; and the stunts that man could do quite won the heart of Bob.

So he had spent an hour there every day, and made such improvement upon his style that already he could hit flying targets which, up to now had been entirely out of his class; of course he hoped that he would never have to realize upon his new gained investment; but then it was nice just to feel better prepared for an emergency, even though such a necessity never arose.

That necessitated the purchase of a second weapon, better adapted to the target shooting in which he indulged; so that both now rested upon the table close to his hand, and gave the little cloistered alcove more the appearance of of an armory than the quiet den of a bachelor, or the former court of love.

The storm kept on increasing in violence with every passing minute. New York would face a list of casualties along the water front in the morning, for there are always boats caught unprepared, despite the warnings of the weather bureau, since captains will dare much for the sake of gain.

When midnight came it was roaring with hearty strength, and the house shook perceptibly with each rush of wind; while the sounds which arose among the trees surrounding the place would have defied description.

Bob would never have known the time, since it was utterly impossible to catch the sound of the church clock, only that he had purchased a little watch, and this he kept upon the wall hanging from a nail, where he could see it at a glance upon striking a match in the night.

Another hour he must keep awake to attend to that miserable time register affair, and then he would be at liberty to seek sleep, if such a thing were within the bounds of possibility in the midst of so much clamor.

That was a long hour too, longer than he had ever known any to be, for it seemed as though he could not apply himself to anything for three consecutive seconds at a time; some internal force was at work, causing him to sigh and think and read and jump up for a turn in the hall—if there was anything that could possibly be done which he did not attempt during that period of time Bob did not know it.

He felt like saying "thank heaven" when finally the hands of his timepiece told that the hour of one had arrived; and it was with considerable vehemence he wound the machine that was to prove a strong factor in carrying him over the border into the land of ducats, when Mr. Hogg sprung that will upon the public.

Now for sleep!

Easily said, but harder of execution it proved, for though he shut his eyes and even turned away to the wall so that the light of the fire migh not shine in his face he could not lose himself in slumber. Half a dozen times he tossed about from side to side, got up and punched his pillows viciously as if the inoffensive things were to blame for his restlessness, and finally sat up on the side of the couch in disgust.

With a smoker's belief in the infallibility of tobacco to cure any trouble he even filled his pipe, lighted the same, and then lay back with a sigh of relief; but not to sleep, oh, no, for fancies of every sort ran riot in his brain until he almost believed he had been drugged in a spirit of fun by some of the boys.

As he listened to the sweep of the equinoctial without, Bob consoled himself with the dubious reflection that it would not matter much anyway, for if the wind continued to increase in violence the house would be down before daylight, with him buried in the ruins.

He even wondered whether those spirits in which his grandsire had believed delighted in selecting a certain brand of night for their return to the scenes of their abode when on earth; and if so would this kind please? It was certainly of a character to satisfy any soul that delighted in turmoil and confusion; for at times one could almost believe the end of the world had come, with every skyscraper in Gotham tumbling in ruins.

This was at two o'clock, and according to his grandfather's calculations the manifestations, if they took place at all, should come about before one; but then in more ways than this the elder Robert had been mistaken, and even there he might not prove a true guide and pilot.

Well, Bob did not know that he could blame any wandering spirit for seeking shelter on such a beastly night as this.

"If they come here they're welcome to the run of the whole house, providing only that they leave me severely alone. I haven't lost any spirits, and I'm not hankering after picking any up, either. That settles it, I guess; as I said before, and now, I'll go to sleep."

He had another guess coming there also, for when about thirty minutes more had crept by he sat up again and grunted dismally.

"No use, hang the luck. I'll have to fetch some sleeping powders along after this, for such occasions. What d'ye think of that, me, Bob Gregory, with fortune in his grasp, unable to sleep, when as a poor wretch all he wanted was the certainty of a breakfast awaiting him when he awoke, to insure ten hours at a stretch? Wow! there goes a limb off a tree, as sure as you live. Won't be anything left by the time daylight comes. I wish I could forget it all and snooze like a top. Wonder what time it is, anyway? Twenty-five after two, and I thought an hour, perhaps two had slipped by. This is slow work. Hang it, if I don't buy some stuff to cook, and have a midnight lunch all by myself if one of these wakeful periods comes along! But it can't last—I must go to sleep, I tell you I will!'"

And having fixed his couch over again he rolled up in a knot, trying to shut out the sounds of the storm.

Resolution goes a long way in most things, and sometimes proves half the battle; but all signs fail in these night vigils where the eyes persist in refusing to yield to the will, and the unfortunate lies there and thinks and thinks, no matter whether he stares at the wall or keeps his head under the clothes.

When Bob had quite exhausted all the methods of inciting a desire for slumber that chanced to come to his mind, he sat up again and scratched his head.

"I guess I'm a fool all right for staying awake when I've got such a decent chance to forget all my troubles; but what's a fellow going to do when he just can't lose himself? Perhaps I'd better cut out visiting around with the boys in the evening, and attend some quiet lecture. If a body could only have company in this hanged thing it wouldn't be half bad, but it's the loneliness of it all that gets on my nerves. R-r-r, listen to that wind, will you? Acts just as if it actually had a spite against this old shack, and meant to tear it down about my ears tonight. Shall I get up and light the lamp? Perhaps by reading a while I could knock some sense into these stupid eyelids of mine that won't stay shut."

He began to debate this point in a fretful manner, being quite out of sorts, and wishing it were closer to day.

Once more he lay down to make a last attempt, but this time he was recumbent just about five minutes when he bounded up again, with his head cocked after the manner of one listening intently.

"What's the matter with me? Something's upsetting me, that's sure. Just as if a fellow could hear any sound inside this house when that howling gale is whanging away outside to beat the band; and yet, and yet, why confound it, I could take my oath there's something moving about here, not far away from me! I don't see it, I don't hear it, but I just seem to feel it! The dickens! was that the way he knew when the spirit of that woman came to him? Am I about to experience a manifestation after all? Drat it, what do they want to pick out such a horrible night as this for, when a quiet one would have been much more comfortable in case a scared lodger had to run for it? Well, I said I wasn't going to be alarmed at anything, and I guess I'm due to hold out here for some time yet. But it does make the goose-flesh stand right out all over a fellow, and I declare to goodness if I don't feel a strange itching at the roots of my hair. I hope it isn't going to stand up on end, for they say that's a sure sign of cowardice. Am I am coward or not? I don't know. Up to now I've stood things pretty decent, so I don't understand what's ailing me tonight. What was that? I thought I heard a sound close by when the wind died down in a lull—something like a rustling and a deep sigh. Gee! it's got me going, as sure as you live. And this time there's no doubt about my being wide awake, so whatever I see it's no dream!"

He lay there listening and trying to summon up resolution enough to jump up, strike a match, and put an end to the foolish fancies that were getting such a desperate grip upon his mind.

"Next thing I know I'll be seeing things with three heads, same as they do when they've been smoking some sort of drugs. That fire hates to give up, and takes a little fling now and then, just to relieve the monotony. Why, hang it! What the deuce, after all I forgot to turn that picture to the wall—no I didn't either, and yet there it faces me—could the wind have turned it around I wonder? It's blowing strong enough outside to do anything, but in here it's different. Well, there's no help for it, I must rise, gird on my armor, and——"

That was the last word he said, for as he sat up and threw his legs over the edge of the cot intending to carry out his suggestion and dress, he saw the face in the frame move, and could positively make out the dim outlines of a figure beneath it—then the flickering flame subsided temporarily, leaving him in the dark again, but with an overpowering sense of some moving object being close at his elbow, reaching out as it were to clutch him; and his flesh grew icy cold at the significance of the fact. All that he had read in that last communication of old man Gregory concerning the visitation of the spirit of his lost Caraminta flashed through his excited mind, as Bob sat there, awaiting the icy touch that would betray the presence of the ghost for the coming of which he had been set to watch.

For now he knew that the picture had not been turned at all, but the face he had looked upon in the faint glimmer of firelight was that of the specter that was to appear to keep the troth with old Robert, whether he be living or whether he be dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

KEEPING HER COMPACT.

Strange to say, after that one shiver of apprehension Bob seemed to pull himself together in a wonderful manner; he had tried to prepare himself for this dread moment when he would have need of all his reserve powers, and the result justified his expenditure of thought.

It had been a part of his plan if any mysterious occurrence took place to reach out immediately and strike a light, for the one thing he disliked was experiencing an adventure of this kind in the dark.

Perhaps is was partly mechanical therefore, his stretching out a hand, seizing a match and drawing the same quickly along the wall; all the while his eyes did not for an instant leave the vague and misty form that seemed to be floating in the atmosphere of the alcove near him, now advancing close to his elbow, anon retreating to the very wall, as if tempted to vanish altogether.

Then the flame of the match sprang into life, and bending forward Bob stared straight into the face of the ghostly visitant—stared into the same midnight orbs that had haunted him from the first moment he had seen the painting within the gold frame, and which even then hung upon the wall.

But alas, Caraminta was no longer young, and save for the wonderful orbs, in which lay those fires that incessantly burned, there was not much resemblance between the picture of youth and the wreck of a life that had been cast upon the breakers. For Bob Gregory now realized that he was not looking upon a specter from the other world, but a dreadful reality—that the Caraminta whom old Robert knew and loved was indeed gone forever, only the shell of her former beauty remaining as a reminder of the past; for he saw the fires of insanity, blazing in those splendid midnight eyes.

Now he grasped the truth concerning the woman whose strange actions had caught his attention while watching the fashionables enter the Lexington avenue mansion of his relatives, the proud De Peysters; Caraminta it was, with strange fancies reeling through her dazed brain, endeavoring to see whether the old man whom she had once bedeviled could still be found at his other home.

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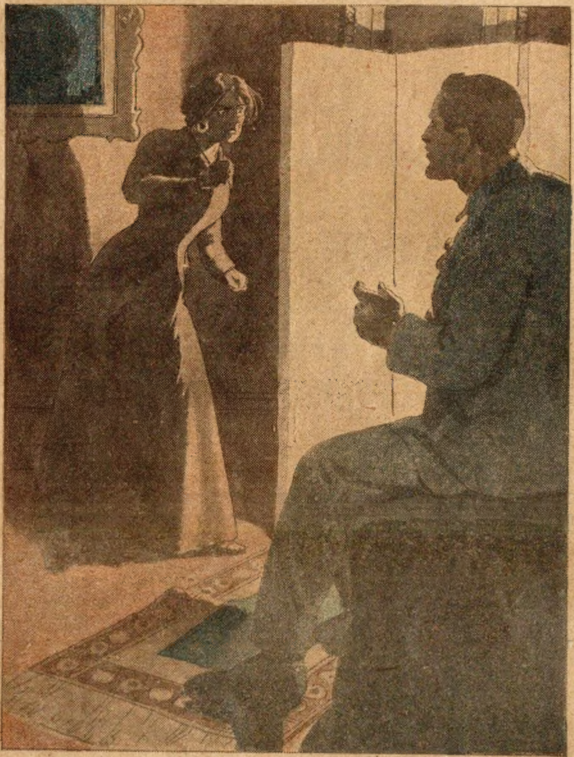
Then the match went out.

He groped for another, fearful lest the crazed woman leap upon him meanwhile; for the expression of her face when she discovered him there instead of old Robert, had reminded him of the desperate cases he had helped to handle when serving as assistant in the asylum.

It was therefore with a feeling of great relief that he finally succeeded in applying the flame of the second match to the tip of his candle, and realized that one danger at least had been passed. In doing this, however, he had been compelled to remove his eyes from the crouching figure of the woman for a few seconds, and upon glancing at the spot as soon as there was sufficient light he found that she had vanished.

Bob hastily got into more clothes, and then lighted his lamp, bound to have sufficient illumination, if he must make an investigation; for it was not a comfortable thought, this possibility of having a mad creature leap out from amid the shadows of some corner, to sink her fingers in his throat, and shrilly cry out that he had murdered her husband.



He was not looking upon a spectre from the other world.

Well, he searched that house through from the first floor up to the attic, but not a trace of the adventuress did he find; the door leading to the cellar was locked so that she had not gone down there; but he discovered that the rear exit, which he could have sworn was fastened when he looked around before now, yielded to his touch, and hence he understood that Caraminta had entered that way, and fled by the same method, possibly possessing the missing key.

Bob barricaded the door with a variety of material purloined from the kitchen; and then went back to resurrect his fire and sit there smoking and waiting through the balance of the hideous night, while the storm continued to rage without, and those mysterious inside noises gave him many a start, thinking it was poor demented Caraminta returned to seek the old man whom she had shamelessly abandoned for the wretch whom she loved in her furious Spanish way.

During those long watches of the night Bob carefully examined the various phases of the affair, and came to a sensible conclusion, which later investigation proved to be close along the border of the truth.

Caraminta, being deceived by the man in whose company she fled, had lost her reason; and yet the one dominating influence that seemed to weigh upon her distracted mind was that she had made a solemn compact with old Robert, and must keep it, visiting the place arranged for the rendezvous again and again until such time as he should appear, either in the flesh or in the spirit.

Perhaps she had come here many times during the last year, and it may have been that glimpses of her ghostly figure flitting about the grounds, or the gleam of a candle held as she passed from room to room had given rise to all these tales about the mansion being the abode of uneasy spirits.

Bob was filled with wonder bordering on awe at the strange conclusion of the matter; he had in reality carried out the wish of his grandfather to the letter, and solved the mystery of the specter that had appeared to the old man at the time he wrote that letter; for it did seem as though this might have been Caraminta in the flesh, already crazed by her wrongs and only intent upon keeping her tryst. On the other hand it may have been but a phantom conjured up in the dreams of the aged millionaire as he lay there, filled with memories of the past—Bob never was able to discover the truth of this feature of the case.

He welcomed the dawn as never before in all his life, and as soon as possible went forth, haggard from his vigil, but a triumphant glow in his eyes.

Mr. Hogg was surprised to find him in his private office when he arrived that morning, and listening to the astonishing story with intense interest.

"She must be found," was his immediate exclamation, as Bob completed his recital; "it is your duty to take care of her, Robert, because, as you know she was in truth the wife of your grandfather, despite all. Spare no expense, but put some of the best detectives in the city on the track. Here, I will give you a note to the chief of them all, that will be of assistance."

Of course this brought results, for it was not very difficult to find out where Caraminta lived; she had a small amount of money, and she was only looked upon as "strange" at the boarding house where she lodged, though her actions had frequently aroused suspicions that she might not be quite right in her mind. Acting under the directions of Mr. Hogg she was taken to a private institution where she would have the best of care so long as she lived.

The story of her life after leaving old Robert so suddenly, when lured by love, was gradually unraveled, and proved to be very sad, so that Bob never cared to think of it more than he could help; but he valued that marvelous picture that hung upon the wall of the alcove in the house behind the hedge, and every time he looked into those luminous midnight eyes he speculated as to what height might not this woman have attained had her life been directed along the right lines instead of those of an adventuress.

Of course Bob filled out his time, and held the fort in the old mansion for three solid months, so that there could not be any breaking of the will on these grounds. Meantime Mr. Hogg had been hard at work, and one fine day the De Peysters received the shock of their

(Continued on page twelve.)

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THE STOLEN WHITE HOUSE;
Or, THE PRESIDENT'S RIVAL

By WILLIAM H. MANNING

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CHAPTER VII.
THE TOUCH OF A KNIFE.

THE girl became briefly silent, her eyes cast down and scanning the broken boat, but without the closeness of one whose mind accompanied her regard. Clearly, she was meditating deeply, and finally she spoke again, though more like one communing with herself.

"It was my father's boat," she said. "What happened to wreck it I don't know, in full, and the money loss is a mere nothing, but there is more, more—I am worried about my father."

Colgrave could not see his way clear, and he felt for light.

"Do you mean that he was in the boat?" he asked.

"Oh, no, not that, and he has suffered no harm, but he has had reason to worry. There are men who care nothing for honor, sir, and who would strike in hostility at those to whom they should feel grateful. You know it is said that the love of money is the root of all evil. There is a man who——"

She stopped and began to draw her whip through her hand viciously. Colgrave's face hardened. Appearances indicated that this shapely miss was in Jason Starwake's confidence, and as anxious as he to retain the money that was due the Texan.

"There is a man——" he repeated tentatively.

She started, turned her gaze upon him again and was as alert as she had before been meditative. Perhaps she discovered nothing forbidding in his grim face, for she cast off a momentary suspicion.

"Have you seen anything else along the river bank?" she asked.

"No. What did you expect to find?"

"Oh! I don't know, I don't know," she cried, with feverish intensity. "I am worried, I say; terribly worried. I don't know what to do or what to expect. This broken boat—do you think they escaped?"

"I have already told you I thought it possible. If you had any dear friend in the craft——"

"Dear friend!" she echoed bitterly. "Anything but that, and though it is a dreadful thing to wish a person dead, my interest here is the hope—but I dare not say it."

Colgrave bowed coldly. He believed it unnecessary for her to be more explicit. It might have been a trifle plainer if she had stated in words that she hoped John Colgrave was dead, but it was a waste of breath. He had wondered how she stood in the drama, and light had come.

He began to wonder, too, how he was to be rid of her company without difficulty, but she settled the question herself. Swift on the heels of her tumultuous words came another of her odd little starts and a wan smile came to her face.

"I must again beg your pardon, sir," she added. "I am not myself, today, and I think I have talked nonsense. Please forget it. I wanted to learn about the boat, and my tongue ran away with me—but never mind. Thank you greatly for your kindness, sir!"

She slapped the horse gently with the whip and was off again at a canter, but as she went her gaze was always on the river bank.

"Hoping to find Colgrave's body, I reckon!" said that gentleman morosely. "Confound it, I'm disappointed in Marcia!"

He surely was disappointed. She had been his childhood's playmate, and had been a gentle, lovable girl, or so he then believed. When he left Texas to claim his inheritance he had remembered her at frequent intervals, and looked forward eagerly to meeting her.

"I've now met her," he growled, "and she wants to find my dead body!"

It was a bearish mood, but he shook it off and smiled composedly.

"Maybe I ought not to blame her, for it is not human nature east of the wild places to enjoy seeing another person scoop in money. She wants to keep my hundred thousand dollars, and why not? It would help her to some luxuries and not call upon Jason Starwake's half million. All very simple when we subject it to figures, but—I can't help feeling disappointed in Marcia. I won't think about her any more."

She had gone up the river, and after a backward glance at the lonely-looking Cormorant, he walked on in the opposite direction.

When he reached his quarters, he and Brickley took up the list of names from the directory. Having seen the conspirators and their clothing it was safe to eliminate all citizens in humble callings, and they checked off those not thus accounted for.

"We will identify the whole lot in due time," he said quietly.

"And then?" asked Brickley.

Colgrave flicked the ash from his cigar.

"Like that," he replied.

"Off with their heads, eh?"

"Yes."

"Pretty heavy job for us two!"

The Texan did not reply, but it struck him more forcibly than ever before that it was a heavy job. A few hours before Brickley had been running tramps a hot race, while all his own acquaintances were in the Southwest. It was a big undertaking to conquer the aristocratic men who aspired to ruin the United States, and only for the fact that, when he had evidence enough to suit him he would call upon the chief officers of the country to handle the burden, enabled him to hold up his hands.

Until then, well, he would be busy, and something might come of it unless the enemy got in the first blow. To prevent that calamity he must be alert and as near sleepless as was possible. He did not aspire to lie in Mayley's undertaking rooms branded as an unknown dead man.

Having made inquiry as to when he was most likely to gain access to the President, whom he wished to see merely as a loyal American, he found that the hour was already past, but he walked over to the White House, nevertheless. When he arrived opposite the grounds he had a sudden impression that he had been dreaming.

How could anybody steal the Presidential mansion?

True, he did not know what Adam Smith had meant by that figurative expression, but the substantial building, with its burly guards, was like a Gibraltar in his eyes. That word "steal" was tantalizingly obscure. Did it mean to break in as a thief? It was impossible. What, then, did it mean?

While he hesitated about entering the grounds he saw a dignfied person come out of the White House, and his eyes gleamed as he recognized Jason Starwake. He was moving toward the street, his head high, his appearance that of a radical aristocrat, and he looked like anything but one who could be easily beaten in a fighting game.

Colgrave's first idea was to avoid him, but it was an excellent opportunity to learn whether his uncle would recognize him, so the Texan resolved to make the test. Acting accordingly, they were soon face to face.

Starwake turned his haughty gaze upon the passing man for a moment, but his expression did not change, and as they receded from each other Colgrave felt that the experiment was a success. Jason had looked him directly in the face and failed to recognize him either as his kinsman or the man who had called at his house the previous night. Obeying an impulse he followed after him, hoping he would be led to the quarters of another of the conspirators, but the hope ended when the Starwake residence was reached.

Jason entered and was seen no more.

When evening came the Texan found himself restless and inclined to visit the schooner, but the idea was so reckless that he abandoned it. Another means of passing the time was considered and dealt with otherwise, and as soon as seemed prudent he went out.

The ancestral home was a magnet to him. As a child he had made free there, enjoying his grandfather's kindness, and as he was part heir to the place he chafed under the thought that he had been cast out the previous evening and marked for death. He believed that a look around the grounds would quiet his restless mood, and he might overhear or see something of importance.

Brickley had demurred at the plan.

"You know what luck you had there before," he reminded.

"It won't happen again."

"Looking for something worse?"

"I'm looking to humble the man who made war on me then."

"If you fail to come back I'll go hunting for you."

Colgrave had laughed at this retort, but when he stood before the dark grounds of the mansion it recurred to him. He surely was about to take some risk, but this did not alarm him.

The side street was dimly lighted, and he vaulted over the old-fashioned fence and the adventure was begun. Trees and shrubbery were everywhere, on this side, with winding walks among them that furnished means to travel, but did little more, for darkness was master of the situation. It was a place fit for concealment, fit for plotting, and perhaps for crime.

The house did not present a brilliant appearance. In what he knew was the servants' quarters lights were bright, but elsewhere everything was subdued and the darkness barely broken.

"If," he thought, "Jason and Marcia are both here, they are together in the living-room, or else one is sitting elsewhere without a light."

That living-room began to attract him more than ever, and he grew anxious for a view of its occupants. As the shades were lowered the opportunities did not seem promising, and the possibility of running upon a member of the family or a servant led him to hesitate and hover in the shrubbery. Prudence and desire were in conflict, but the bold nature of the man triumphed.

He advanced, gained the piazza, was thankful that a spreading lilac bush thrust itself forward as cover, and then made a further discovery. Although the shades were drawn, the windows were raised high and only the languidly-flapping fabric barred his way. Listening and hearing no voice, he moved the shade aside gently.

Jason was there.

He sat at a table, a newspaper in his hand, but the sheet had fallen to his lap and he was gazing at vacancy and deep in meditation. With his fine figure, costly and immaculate attire, and strong and bold face, he was an impressive person even in his time of inactivity, and the spy again realized that, with his high social position, he would make a hard antagonist in a battle of wits. And back of him were Adam Smith and the other conspirators.

Presently he moved and lifted the paper to read. What item interested him was not certain, but Colgrave, even at his distance, picked out certain headlines and knew that the story was there of the unknown man found in the river. That account plainly fascinated Jason, though he did not seem especially pleased.

The wrong man had been drowned in the collision, and doubtless he was wondering where his nephew was.

Colgrave was still watching when the outer door opened and he stepped a little back, expecting somebody to come out. Delay followed, however, and a voice sounded within.

"Do you find nothing more in the paper, father?"

"No more."

Again Colgrave lifted the corner of the shade. Marcia was on the threshold between the room and the hall, her attention fixed on Jason.

"He must have escaped," she continued.

"So it seems, Marcia."

"Free, and ready to strike another blow at you."

"Blows do not always succeed," said Starwake, with a composed smile.

"But this man, this wretched creature with his demand for money, will do his best, no doubt, to worry you."

"Rest easy, child, he will get no money."

"But may not his enmity lead him to worse things? I have been looking from my window, and the grounds seemed peopled with evil things. The darkness never was so black before, though blacker nights have been with us often. I wish there was not a tree or bush on our premises. Father, I beg that you will never for one moment be without a revolver, and that you will keep it loaded—or that you will carry a knife."

"My dear girl," Jason gently returned, "you are a trifle nervous now. Do not permit this little trouble to worry you. I am amply able to deal with the man who wanted money, and he dares not venture an act of violence. I think I have frightened him away, and if he is not yet gone I can soon convince him.

To Develop the Bust

To Beauty Editor: I am so ashamed of my thin bust that I want to ask you if there is any harmless way to develop it. My hips and the rest of my body are right for the present styles and I do not want them any larger, but my bust is so flat that I would try anything that gave hope of even three or four more inches development. MARY S.

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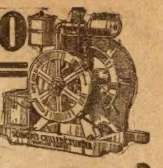

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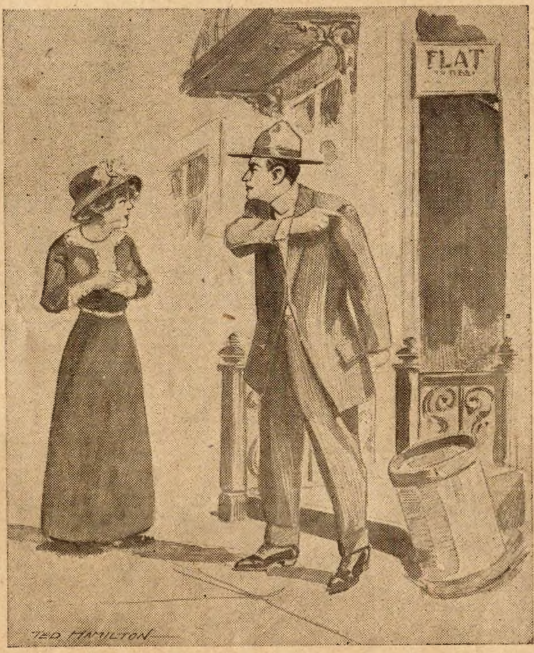
There, there, child, say no more, for there is no danger."

A slight note of irritation accompanied the last words and he waved his hand as if to dismiss her. She was about to speak, but checked the impulse and turned and left the room, giving him a faint smile as she did so.

Colgrave had heard everything, but he waited for no more. Remembering that the outer door had been opened he nimbly left the piazza and fell back some yards into the tree-clad way. He expected to see Marcia turn the corner of the house, moving toward where he had lately been, but she remained invisible and no steps sounded on the piazza.

The possibility that she had gone among the shrubbery soon occurred to him, and he went farther away. Discovery might not result in serious mishap, but if he were detected prowling around the premises, it would be a barrier to future, and probably more important, secret calls.



If you try to stay he surely will not find you.

It was dawning upon him that the night promised nothing of importance, and that he would do well to go away, when a footfall sounded close at hand. A little startled he paused and stood statue-like.

Who else was among the trees? Was it Marcia?

He turned his head to survey the way of retreat, but just then there was a rustling in front and the shock of a blow followed by the shiver of steel along his flesh. He had met an assassin's knife.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARD PRESSED.

Colgrave had seen many wild adventures in the forests and on the plains of the Southwest, and one of the things he had learned was to detect and defeat the stealthy advance of foes, but on the present occasion, being in Washington, he had made the mistake of dealing with the prowler according to Eastern standards. Failing to give the acute attention he would have bestowed upon an Apache or Comanche, he had missed a link in the chain.

The leap of the unknown, the blow and the creep of the knife came almost as one, but it was only the Texan's clothing that suffered greatly. The steel brushed hotly but harmlessly across his breast, and with its venomous kiss he was quickly himself.

A second blow might be more successful than the first, and he flung out a strong hand and grasped with good aim. He was not surprised when his fingers closed upon a wrist plainly feminine.

"What next?" he asked tranquilly.

The other person struggled passionately, but he held fast. There was a moment of wordless warfare, while the profound darkness veiled the two who contested so energetically but unevenly. Then the would-be slayer ceased to struggle.

"Well?" she questioned, with a sound halfway between a gasp and a sob. "Do you intend to murder me?"

"It seems to me you are the one who looks to murder. Was the use of the knife a love-pat?"

"I wanted to kill you."

"So I thought."

"I would do it now if I could."

"Don't try, for you do not seem highly successful in your work."

"Jason Starwake, you are a cold-blooded villain!"

"What's that?" cried Colgrave, astonished.

"I think you heard me."

"So I did, but you called me—whom?"

The prisoner recoiled a little.

"Are you not Jason Starwake?" she demanded.

"No, thank heaven! And you—I thought you were Marcia."

The girl had been straining against his grasp, but her muscles suddenly relaxed. She sounded a soft pant, as if confused and something more. Then she pulled against his hold again, but he gave her no liberty.

"You belong in the house?" she questioned, her words falling slowly.

"Frankly, I do not. Do you?"

"Why else should I be here?"

"Miss Mystery, let us be more direct, and let us lose no time. If you mistook me for Jason Starwake and tried to kill me because of that fact, I have something to say to you. If, again, you are an intruder here, you and I had better put a greater distance between us and the house. The next person who comes may not be a friend. Come!"

He tried to draw her away. She hesitated, but yielded slowly, and Colgrave led her until they were near the boundary fence. While going he had been thinking, and his course was marked out.

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GENTLE JABS.

But the gossip crop is never a failure.

Bad habits don't seem so bad if they are yours.

Occasionally those who say but little talk too much.

The love of money is also the root of much matrimony.

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Follow your inclinations when they are headed the right way.

There is always room for one more in the straight and narrow path.

Time and tide wait for no man—but it's different with an untied woman.

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It doesn't increase the size of anything to look at it through a magnifying glass.

A woman is either happy or miserable, depending upon the way she feels about it.

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The reason so many men get married is because they are too tender hearted to refuse.

A woman has no kick coming if her husband's mother thinks she is a good housekeeper.

Marrying a man to reform him is like trying to make a satisfactory omelette out of a bad egg.

Every woman should have an aim in life—even if she can't hit the side of a barn with a brick.

Success has been known to assume the guise of a sexton long enough to dig the grave of genius.

The woman who knows how to spank a baby properly didn't acquire the knowledge through a correspondence school.

Occasionally there is a man that even his Satanic majesty wouldn't have, but there is always some woman who is willing to take him.

(Continued from page nine.)

"Young woman," he resumed, "you and I are in pitch darkness here, and we can mutually hide our identity if we wish. After a minute or two I shall put no restrictions upon you, but I fancy we can be more at peace with each other. Let's try, and you shall not regret it. Why did you wish to kill Starwake?"

"Because he is a great scoundrel!" she exclaimed passionately.

"Are you sincere in saying that?"

"I surely am."

"Then I have no quarrel with you. The tap of the knife is forgotten. Let me lead the way in frankness. I am not an inmate of that house. Are you?"

"No."

"So far, good. Why do you hate Starwake?"

"Because he has done evil to my father, perhaps taken his life."

"Who is your father?"

"You may be acting treacherously, but if you are a man you will sympathize with me. My father is named Peter Olland, and—and——"

She trailed off into the indistinct and seemed to find it hard to say more, but the pathetic touch was still in her voice and Colgrave found no return of his former suspicion.

"Olland!" he repeated. "I never heard of him. Who and what is he?"

"He has been watchman on an old schooner called the Cormorant——"

"Go on!" directed the Texan eagerly. "Has been watchman? Isn't he watchman there now?"

"He has disappeared."

"Since when?"

"Today."

Colgrave still held her hand, and he would not have relaxed his hold for a great deal. He was astonished afresh, for the weaving in of the lines of the case was unexpected, but it was hopeful to find himself in touch with the old schooner's party. He tried to grasp the meaning of the little he knew, and recalled that the watchman had certainly been neglectful of duty, else Brickley and himself never could have boarded her unseen and unheard by the man on watch. If there was contention among the mysterious party there was hope for outsiders.

"Young lady," he answered. "I am a plain, humble man, but I have good will for all who are in trouble. If you will bear me company until we can have a frank talk I surmise that I may be of service to you. If you need a friend, call upon me, and don't let us lose sight of each other!"

"I do need a friend, and I will gladly bear you company until——"

"Listen!" said Colgrave, suddenly lowering his voice. "Others are astir here, and we may do well to leave the grounds. I hear persons moving at two different points, and they come this way. May I help you over the fence to the next lot——"

"Somebody is advancing in that direction, too!"

"True."

"They are on all sides of us, and they are closing in. I fear they are policemen, and it may be the Starwakes have telephoned for them. What are we to do? and her voice quivered painfully and fell to a husky sob. "Oh! what shall we do?"

That was what Colgrave wanted to know. His respect for officers of law was not profound when they threatened his peace of mind, and he would have made a dash for liberty had he been alone, trusting to luck to bowl over all obstructing bluecoats; but it fell heavily upon him that he had the unknown girl in his charge, and was in duty bound to carry her through to both safety and secrecy. Her name must not become public, for to the worry would be added Starwake's hostility.

He swept a glance about to locate the new invaders as accurately as possible.

"Place yourself fully in my care," he whispered to the girl, "and you shall not regret it. Now, come with me. Bend low!"

Her prompt obedience helped greatly, and they skulked light-footed along the fence for a few rods, after which he lifted her over and himself joined her. They were now on another owner's property, and he hoped that the men who were approaching the fence made up all that were in that quarter. The trees were less thick and shrubbery almost lacking, but the way was dark.

Several yards were reeled off in speedy flight, but presently he caught sight of a tall figure that stood in the middle of a patch of lawn, a locality they had almost reached in their flight. The man's headgear marked him a policeman, and Colgrave took a sudden fancy and drew his companion behind a thicket of bushes.

"That fellow will probably move soon," he said softly.

"Suppose," asked the girl, "that he comes this way?"

"He may pass us by."

"But if he finds us?"

"All the worse for him."

"Would you touch an officer?"

"Would you have him capture us?" the Texan retorted.

"Oh! why, why did I come here!" she sighed, her voice quivering.

"You came because you and I are destined to help each other. We will speak of that later. Ah! the fellow moves!"

"He walks this way!"

It was too true to be otherwise than exasperating. The policeman was drawing nearer, and though his manner was hesitating, he was so clearly alert that Colgrave was worried. For a moment he contemplated delaying until the man was within reach, and then trusting all to a sudden assault upon him, but it had not been his way to do violence to officers of the law, and he did not like to open his Washington career so inauspiciously.

Yet, as he marked the glances thrown to the right and left by this arm of the law, he wondered how he was to avoid a fight.

At that moment, as he crouched low, his wandering hand chanced to close upon a stone the size of a goose-egg and it brought a new idea.

"Listen!" he whispered to the girl. "A moment later there will be a crashing sound in the undergrowth off yonder. The moment that you hear it, dart away to the right and gain the black cover of yonder trees. Do you understand?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Partly gain your feet and be prepared to run. Are you ready?"

"Yes. Trust me for that!"

Colgrave poised the stone and flung it as planned. It fell lower than he expected, striking the ground prematurely, but then bounced and crashed softly into the target. The startled policeman shifted his gaze and stared at the quarter whence the sound came. He did not know that, while he looked, two human figures had darted from the shrubbery nearer at hand and gained far better cover. The Texan looked back.

"Brass buttons doesn't understand what to make of it!" he said, with a chuckle. "Luck made that noise just right. Oho! he moves that way. Now is our chance, and unless the whole police force of the city is at hand, we stand a good chance of getting clear. We'll try it. Come!"

Clasping her arm lightly Colgrave led with quick steps, and she proved her mettle by scudding along with him surefooted as an antelope. Passing as near the street as was prudent they soon gained the extremity of the lot, and the thoroughfare lay before them.

"Nobody in sight!" she breathed thankfully.

"Fact! Things are coming our way. Over!"

He lifted her bodily and leaped after her.

"Now," he pursued, "we will walk away. Don't hurry, and don't glance around nervously. Let me do all the looking, which will be out of the corner of my eyes. When we meet somebody, gaze straight ahead and appear innocent."

She laughed, and not wholly nervously.

"This gets at one's heart a bit," she said, "but I'm not so sure that I dislike it. It is fine to play risky games and win."

Colgrave glanced keenly at her as they passed near a street-light. She was a comely young woman, and fairly well dressed. She lacked the graces of Marcia Starwake, and had certainly been reared in a humbler walk in life, but she was refined and ladylike. It was not this that interested the Texan most. Reading her, he was sure she possessed a brave nature and versatility, and he nodded with satisfaction.

When they had gone a few blocks he took a look rearward and fell into an easier pace.

"We can draw our breath naturally now," he remarked. "Discovery on Jason's premises might not have cost us our lives, but it was vitally necessary that we escape capture and recognition. We did both, and now we can talk freely. So your father was watchman on board of the old schooner?"

She took an upward glance at her escort. She saw a frank, grave and manly face, and her past confidence in him grew even greater.

"Yes," she responded; "the decaying schooner that lies in an arm of the Potomac. It's name is the Cormorant."

"How long has he been watchman?"

"Nearly six months."

"Who engaged and who paid him?"

"Jason Starwake."

"At what hours was he on duty?"

"At night."

Colgrave felt that one point was settled. It was her father who had been on duty when the recent trouble took place, and it seemed that he had suffered for his lack of care in guarding the deck.

"My understanding," he pursued, "is that the Cormorant has been lying there for years, a worthless wreck. Now, what was aboard her that made a watchman necessary?"

"I don't know, for father has been very close-mouthed. Sometimes I thought he did not himself know why he was there, nor what he was guarding; but, now he has so suspiciously disappeared, I am disposed to be frank. Before he secured that chance in the schooner he had been ill a long time, and his condition made it hard for him to get work again. Both mother and I realized that he wavered before accepting the offer, though we did not know why. After he began there his explanations were never clear or satisfactory to us, and we have been troubled, greatly troubled over it."

"You mean that you think the Cormorant has some unpleasant secret?"

"Worse than that, far worse. A dark and wicked secret!" she cried.

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"And what," Colgrave asked, "is the secret?"

CHAPTER IX.

FIGHTING THE FOE.

The young woman shook her head despondently.

"I cannot even guess the secret," she replied. "Remember the facts. My father was paid to watch a mere hulk, and that simply meant to keep others away. When mother or I asked him what was there he evaded the subject, though always clumsily. When he slept he muttered of the old schooner, and plainly carried trouble on his mind, but his mutterings were never intelligible; that is to say, he never revealed anything, merely giving us chance to see that he was alarmed, worried and miserable. He was an honest man, sir, and his connection with the Cormorant preyed upon his mind deeply. Poor father!"

"And now he has disappeared?" asked Colgrave.

"Yes," she said, sighing. "Always before prompt to return home, he has not been near today."

"What do you think?"

"That the terrible men he has worked for have done him mischief. I can see no further than that. I hope he is living, but, if so, they have shut him up somewhere. If they saw fit to discharge him they would, as I look at it, not dare give him chance to expose them."

"Why should they discharge him?"

"I can find only one theory. His illness has taken one form that really unfitted him for duty. He fell asleep easily, and could not resist as well persons do. A week or so ago his employers claimed that somebody had been aboard secretly by night, an intruder, of course; and they talked harshly to poor father. Maybe he has again fallen asleep when on watch."

Colgrave could well believe this, for he recalled the events of the previous night. In a way he was responsible for the supposed calamity, and the result was to be expected. Intruders had been aboard even on the night of a conference, and he was not surprised that Peter Olland had not returned home.

"Have you ever been on board the schooner?" he pursued.

"Never! Nobody was allowed there, and we all had strict orders not to mention the Cormorant in any way."

"Has it ever occurred to you that your father may be detained there?"

"That is exactly what I fear. Oh! if I dared venture there!"

"Perhaps somebody else will venture."

She gave the Texan a quick glance.

"Do you mean ——"

"Miss Olland, are you capable of keeping a secret through thick and thin—with your father's welfare at stake?"

"Even without that incentive, and with it yes, to the death!"

"In that case I shall find it in my way to give you all the help I can. For one thing, I'll board the schooner if it is possible for man to do it, but a venture tonight would be reckless; they will be as alert as so many hawks. Meanwhile, we will see what can be done elsewhere. It happens that I love Jason Starwake as little as you do, and something may be devised between us in this quarter. First of all, you must move early tomorrow morning."

"Move?" she echoed blankly.

"Totally disappear from your present home."

"Why?"

"The men who have put your father out of sight have made one mistake; they should have kidnaped you and your mother at the same hour, to prevent you from talking. Proof is found in the fact that you are talking at this very moment. Maybe something has disarranged their plans, and you owe your present liberty to a slip, but be sure you are not forgotten. Stay where you are and be kidnaped, or get ahead of the foe by yourselves running away. Which shall it be?"

"You startle me, sir!"

"That gang will startle you even more if you stay. You must go in the morning—wait! there is no morning about it. You must go this very night."

She paused and turned a wan, quivering face upward, scanning Colgrave in sudden terror.

"Are they such desperate men as that?" she asked faintly.

"They are. Believe me, they are. I know their way better even than you do."

"But we have nowhere to go ——"

"A place shall be found quickly. My landlady seems to be a good woman, and since she has learned that I am from her native State, which is Texas, she has given me her good will and confidence. Among other things she has told me that a friend of hers has rooms to let. That is your chance. You and your mother sleep there tonight."

"But if we leave father will not find us when he returns."

"If you try to stay he surely will not find you."

The girl shivered and gave over argument. Colgrave's forceful words had been so much in line with her own ideas of the past that she was ready to believe. Terror seemed to walk abroad in Washington, and her courage temporarily wavered and fell away. For a moment she recalled that her companion had but lately been an utter stranger, and that social customs had a claim, but she had learned to trust him and felt that her mother would do the same.

She hesitated no longer, but agreed to his plan.

They were now near her home, and she announced the fact. Colgrave instantly grew more intent upon their surroundings. He swept a glance here and there, and each passer-by fell under sharp scrutiny. It was something that nobody was visible who lurked in a doorway, but the most threatening quarter was yet to be reached. The neighborhood was poor and the houses humble and doubtful of look, and he did not like the general air of the locality.

His courage was not shaken, but it was essential to his aims that the Ollands be removed without anything that would make the conspirators familiar with their faces or his.

"Which floor do you live on?"

"The second," the girl replied.

"Are the hall and stairway lighted?"

"Oh, no, the tenants are too poor for that. You will find it very dark inside. Do you imply that danger may be there?"

"The question is, are the gang already there? If so, they may have seized your mother and be waiting for you. Your rooms would seem to be the proper point for that game, but I shall look sharply to the hall. What is that hall like? Is it wide and roomy?"

"No. A door opens on either hand, as you enter, and that is all but the stairs. They fill the place from wall to wall."

"Now I shall know better how to proceed. Is this the house?"

"Yes."

"Is your mother in the habit of coming to the head of the stairs to greet you on your return?"

"She often does, if I go out."

"If she does that now, do you go up promptly and alone, while I'll remain at the foot of the stairs. If she does not do it, I'll go up with you. We must give the gang as little chance as possible if they are already here. If your mother meets you she is still unmolested, and I'll guard the outer door and see that nobody skulks past. Don't speak to me after we go in."

The girl's heart was thumping heavily by this time. Had she been alone, it never would have occurred to her that danger might hover inside, but Colgrave's voice and manner both conveyed the impression that he knew what he was talking about, and she was frightened.

She opened the door, revealing a black space beyond, and almost immediately movements became audible at the head of the stairs. Even there all was darkness.

"Mary, is that you?" sounded a call.

"Yes, mother. I'm home. I'll come up at once."

She moved, and Colgrave was alone at his chosen point. He heard the other woman ask something about her husband, but he gave the question small attention. All his faculties were centered in listening for foreign sounds. If a gang was already above it would soon be manifest and if only one person, a spy, was present, he would try to sneak out quietly.

His face was upturned when the door at his immediate left hand was softly opened and somebody emerged. That it was a man was next to certain, but he could tell no more. He was at once placed in a serious dilemma. He had forgotten to ask about the lower floor, so he now had no means of knowing whether the man was a tenant or a ruffian, and the black space told no tales. Their elbows almost touched, but he knew not whether to shake hands cordially or to throttle his neighbor.

While he hesitated he was impressed by the fact that a hot, close, foul air drifted from the room into his face, and it gave him tidings. It was the air of a room that had been closed and unventilated for some time, and certainly no family would shut themselves up hermetically in midsummer weather. Then a board creaked within, and that, too, conveyed its tidings.

Another instant and he had hold of the fellow by his side, grasping for his throat and getting the desired grip, while his free arm was wound around the man's body in a relentless coil.

It was a good beginning, but as the prisoner bounded to free himself his feet struck the lower stair and he fell, dragging Colgrave with him. The bare boards gave forth a rattle and clatter, and quick hollow steps echoed in the empty room. Other foes were pressing forward to attack the Texan.

Realizing the need of further prompt action he squirmed to his feet, lifting his prisoner with him, and then, as something a trifle blacker than the night appeared in the doorway, he flung his man forward with all his force. What he had expected came to pass. Man number one struck man number two, and both fell clattering inside.

A moment more and Colgrave had the door closed, but he realized that others were there, and that he could not long hold the barrier shut. He clung to the knob and turned his face upward, anxious to call to the two women, but uncertain as to what was advisable. While he hesitated the rustling of skirts was followed by the patter of footsteps, and he ventured a call.

"Are you there?"

"Yes, yes!" came the reply, and he

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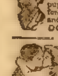

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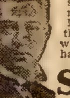

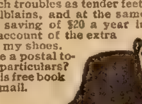

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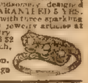

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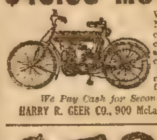

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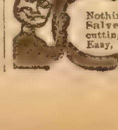

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recognized Mary's voice. "We are ready to go."

"Good! Do so at once. You remember my directions?"

By that time Mary and her mother were at his side.

"To go to your quarters and ask for Mr. Brickley?" she whispered.

"Exactly. I will soon join you. Go, at once!"

"Are you not in danger?"

"Not a bit," replied Colgrave cheerfully, though all the while the enemy on the other side of the door were tugging at the inside knob and it was a hard task to hold against them. "All easy here, for I have them shut up. They are beaten. Go! Hasten!"

Mary hesitated a moment and was plainly worried for the welfare of her champion, but she had received directions before entering the house and the Texan's latest words had repeated them in part. It seemed wrong to leave him alone, but possibly she would upset all his plans by lingering.

She opened the outer door and hastened away, accompanied by her mother, and the light fell briefly upon certain bundles they carried. Then they were gone, and Colgrave was left in the former darkness.

Affairs were going hard with him. The strength of numbers was in the room beyond, and it required his every effort to hold the door fast, but he was struggling for secrecy if not for life. It must be fought out this way, for neither party dared have the aid of the police. He believed, too, that the gang, in order to take him in the rear, would not venture to pass out by the windows, for such an unusual step would attract attention from passers-by.

He was clinging with swelling muscles when the pressure on the other side suddenly relaxed and a dull, heavy thud followed, after which came a medly of imprecations. He guessed the situation readily. His opponents had pulled off the other knob, and as it gave way they had a fall, one upon another.

Quick thought the Texan took then. He must go sometime, and there was not likely to be another chance like the present. Opening a knobless door would present a trifle of trouble except to those who had dealt with like difficulties before, and that lull was his opportunity. For a moment his hand strayed in the vain hope that the key was on his side, but it was lacking.

Ah! the outer door! That remained to be considered. He found the key in the lock, whipped it out, passed out, and shooting the bolt, had an impediment for the ruffians to deal with later.

Turning in the direction that would make him free from observation from the windows, he walked briskly away, though without the unusual haste that would attract attention. Going, he smiled grimly.

"Rather an interesting contest where neither party dares have help from the police," he mused, "and I'm in a fair chance of victory, but I've got to gain my quarters free from the eyes of a spy."

For ten minutes he stretched away, all the while keeping his back turned toward his actual destination. By that time he believed he had made himself safe from hostile observation, and eager to reach home, he sent a glance over his shoulder.

"Blazes!" he growled, "there's a spy on my track!"

This powerful story will be continued in the next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

The Luck of Gregory.

(Continued from page seven.)

lives when notified of the finding of a later will that reversed all the conditions by which they had come into possession, and left them but a meager fifth of the big estate.

It was a pretty legal fight, but Mr. Hogg had made careful provisions and fortified himself in such a way that the lawyers on the other side finally advised their clients to compromise. Accordingly Bob entered into communication with his relatives, and in the end equitable arrangement meeting all views was brought about, and the great Gregory case was closed, without the public learning more than the mere result, divested of the romance and tragedy that had led up to this finis.

Bob had changed his mind and concluded that he had no use for that lordly mansion on Lexington avenue, nor the stately butler and other servants who went with it; but he did take the old house uptown, for there were memories connected with that which must always have an influence on his life.

Many a time would he rest upon that same old lounge and setting his eyes on that remarkable picture above allow his thoughts to roam back to the phantasies of those night when he kept lonely watch and ward in the house behind the hedge. Never had his clever brain when writing for the magazines been able to conjure up so strange a series of situations as had now befallen him in reality; and he must always admit that in his case, at least, truth had proven stranger than fiction.

This lasted for a few years, and then in the natural course of events the land upon which the old mansion stood became too valuable to hold in that unremunerative way, and finally at the advice of Mr. Hogg the place was sold while Bob was spending the winter in Egypt.

He sent a list of a few things which he insisted upon retaining, however, and among them were the lounge from the alcove, old Robert's picture, the desk in which he had found that scroll written by the shaky hand of his grandfather, the bricks above the fireplace with their significant message intended for his eye alone, and last, but far from least, that fascinating picture of Caraminta as a girl, looking out upon the world as if questioning what it had in store for her.

Bob married, of course, later on, and has been exceedingly happy in his domestic life, with a little family growing up around him; they made no pretense of having any place in the fashionable set, but spend much time in travel, and have a home in California as well as in New York.

Bob's chief delight is in keeping in touch with the fellows of the newspaper world whom he knew many years ago, and frequently he helps a despondent chap to maintain a firmer grip on life through advice and friendly loans

In his home he has the venerable old lounge in his den, ditto desk; and upon the wall hangs the picture of the unfortunate Caraminta, who has since passed over to the spirit world, the problem which she and old Robert had wrestled with still unsolved.

Bob seldom speaks of the past now, but sometimes as he sits there alone reading, with a pipe between his teeth, he will look up at that face with the haunting eyes, and memory carries him back over the stormy scenes of those days when, with the skies dark and forbidding, his luck changed front, he found a chance to make good.

The end.

* * *

Nothing in Comparison.

"You certainly have them going," remarked a Mississippi Representative to Senator John Sharp Williams of that State, just after the coalition of Democrats and insurgents had routed the Republicans on the wool bill.

"That's nothing to what they're going to do," replied Mr. Williams. "Did I ever tell you the story of the haunted house in Mississippi?

"A house down near my plantation was much feared by the darkies because of a ghost which was said to inhabit it. The darkies wanted to disprove this fear, and coaxed one of their number to spend the night in the cabin. They gave him a dollar for the work. The next morning a few venturesome ones went to the cabin and found it deserted. A window was broken out, sash and all. There was some speculation about the fate of the ghost tamer, and his friends began to worry when he did not put in an appearance by noon. That evening a footsore and weary darky trudged into the settlement. He was greeted with joyous shouts and asked to tell his story.

"'I went into dat dar cabin,' he said, 'and I sort o' drapped offen a doze. When I woke up I saw a feller a-sittin' alongside o' me. He was carryin' his head in his ahms. I took a look at him and went right through dat window and ran about a mile and a half. I sat down on a log, a-pantin' and a-sweatin', and the first thing I knew that fellow was a-sittin' alongside o' me again.

"'We had a nice run, didn't we?' he said.

"'Run,' said I, 'that run wasn't nuthin' to what we're going to do right now.'"

*

Green, But No Greeny.

Just because Col. E. H. R. Green is fat and looks good-natured, and has a sort of out-of-door air, some of the sharpers about town had him sized up as easy when he first returned from Texas to take care of the properties of his mother, Mrs. Hetty Green. It may be, too, that the colonel's breezy candor kind of coaxed the boys along a bit. He will talk on any subject when he feels like talking, with a frankness unusual in the banking fraternity.

"Here's my old friend, Mr. Hinks," said the colonel one night, at his hotel, grabbing at a well-dressed man, who was walking by without speaking. His old friend, Mr. Hinks, shrank into himself and was obviously embarrassed. After a moment's talk, he got away, and the colonel's well-padded sides shook. "Hinks is one of 'em," said he "I'd just landed in town when Hinks came up to me one night in the hotel. He had met me in Texas, he said. So-and-so had introduced him. I didn't remember him, but the name he mentioned was that of a good friend of mine, and I thought maybe my memory was at fault. By and by he opened the trap. He told me of the good thing he had under cover, and that I could make a million dollars if I'd just put in a few thousands. It was a gold mine, and he had the gaudiest maps and prospectus I have ever seen. I listened to him until he got through.

"'Hinks,' said I, 'just between friends, I've got a gold mine of my own that I want to sell. Now, I won't buy a mine, but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll draw cards with you, the winner take both. That's all either is fit for.'"

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Womankind wonders why famous beauties grow old, but do not grow fat. They live at silken ease, amid the porcelain flesh pots. The wine, that puffs out obscure mortals, flows not illiberally down their alabaster throats. Yet their life-long loaf does not thicken their limbs nor double their chins. What is the secret of the long-lived gracefulness of the hautton?

One-half ounce Marmola, ½ oz. Fl. Ex. Cascara Aromatic, 3½ oz. Peppermint Water. This is the famous Marmola Prescription, long familiar to the fashionable pharmacists of the world and their clientele, but which has only recently penetrated to the knowledge of the hoi polloi of womankind. Since when, for convenience sake, it has been put into elegant pocket form, the Marmola Prescription Tablet, which can now be had at well nigh any druggist, fashionable and ordinary, or the Marmola Co., 1238 Farmer Bldg., Detroit, Mich., in large cases for seventy-five cents.

With this tablet any woman can reduce, be losing a pound a day, in a few weeks; take off fat (where is shows most) on chin, abdomen, hips, etc., without need of exercising, table restraint, fear of wrinkles, or the slightest physical harm or uneasiness.

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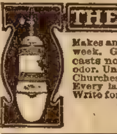

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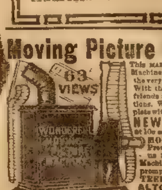

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Our American made, stem wind watch beautifully designed case factory-tested, guaranteed for 5 years, and this latest style double heart & knot rings are given to boys and girls for selling 20 packets of high grade art post cards at 10c a packet. Order 20 packets to-day. When sold send us $2.00 and we will positively send you at once the watch, ring and chain.

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ART STUDIES REAL PHOTOGRAPHS of lovely women from life. Classy den pictures; 3 for 25c; 7 (all different) 50c. Money back if not satisfied. ART PHOTO CO., 1210 B.W., GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

THE POETS' CORNER

NO ROOM FOR ME.

When company came in the long ago,
I can remember it all with woe.
The message of mother and those who knew—
No room at the table, my dear, for you!

No room for me when the company came,
No room for me when they started the game,
No room at the picnic—ah, terrible fate
Of a little child having to wait, and wait!

No room at the festival filled with joy,
No room at the party for just a boy;
No room at the wedding, no room anywhere
Except outside in the wide, free air.

No room in the carriage or in the boat,
No room on the back of the billy goat;
No room at the funeral for such as me—
No room for a boy where he wants to be!

No room for a boy at the party or play,
No room for him now, no room for him then,
When you were a child in the sweet yesterday
Who now are fathers of little men.

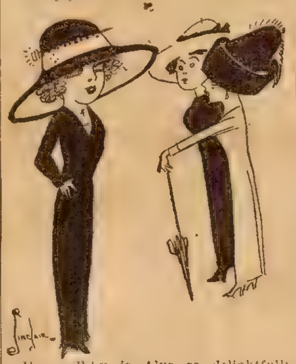
No room for them? Quit it, and let them come,
Party or festival, with smiles, not glum,
As they stand at the door of the dining-room sobbing
While the company eats to their little heart's throbbing!

No room for Johnny and no room for Mike:
No room for any one's poor little tike!
Make room forever, don't make them wait,
Like a poor little beggar that knocks at the gate!

A FALLTIME MORNING.

Ain't no use fer ter fret an' pine
W'en dey ain't no melon on de melon vine,
Kaze de 'possum's comin' an' his eye you'll shine,
Wid joy fer de falltime mawnin'!

Ain't no use fer ter weep an' cry
Kaze ol' Miss Summer say "good-by"
Dar's de fiddle playin' an' de good time's nigh,
Wid joy fer de falltime mawnin'!



Helen—Why is Alys so delightfully happy?

Grace—She just sent a pair of her shoes by mail and it only took a 2 cent stamp.

HER MARK.

The little girl has gone away;
But where she romped but yesterday
There is a trail of things she had
To make her baby play day glad;
Rag Betsy lying by the door
All twisted round hind side before,
Like she had made a sudden halt
Right midway in a somersault,
And right beside her over there
The cotton cat, feet in the air.

The cut out pictures and the cat,
Or old rag Betsy's ragged hat,
Or old rag Betsy, or the things
To which a little baby clings
With the strength of her baby arms,
Finding in them a wealth of charms
Undreamed of grownups, hold me not
As much as one small smudgy spot
Made on the shiny looking glass
Of the hall rack by the small lass.

Her mother soaped her hands and face—
Then she jerked her loose and made a race
For the tall mirror, just to look,
As she said, "If the soap had took":
Her soapy hand pressed there, and then
Her mother yanked her down again
And, laughing, both of them went back
To water, soap and towel rack;
Now she's out in the country air
But the print of her hand is there.

The imprint of her hand is there,
And her glad eyes and tousled hair
Almost seem there when I pause to
Moon o'er that smudge the way I do;
Late paper or late magazine,
That little smudge comes in between
My eyes and it and I sit still
The way a foolinsh daddy will,
Thinking of her; lips half a-pout
To—but a kiss would wipe it out.

BALLADE OF METHODS.

Gardens with roses in bloom,
Moonlight and words that are sweet
Hints of elusive perfume,
Madness and passionate heat;
Down at her idolized feet—
Ah, since the world was begun
Man has cajoled her, the cheat!
This is the way it is done!

Firelit and silent the room,
Here pass the hours full fleet,
Snowstorm and darkness and gloom
Fill all the winter bound street;
Gloom in a heart that would beat
Slower if hope there were none—
Ah, but her armor's complete!—
This is the way it is done!

All the year round—to resume—
All the world over they meet,
Man and the maiden—their doom
Each is most happy to greet.
He is pursuer—how neat
That little fiction! She's won!—
Smack!—'tis her canceled receipt!—
This is the way it is done!

L'ENVOI.

Garden, or cozy retreat,
Firelight, or moonlight, or sun,
She is a captor discreet—
This is the way it is done!

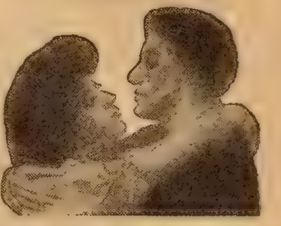
MOTHERS.

Mothers are the queerest things
'Member when John went away,
All but mother cried and cried
When they said goodby that day.
She just talked, and seemed to be
Not the slighest bit upset—
Was the only one who smiled
Others' eyes were streaming wet!

But when John come back again
On a furlough, safe and sound,
With a medal for his deeds,
And without a single wound,
While the rest of us hurrahed,
Laughed and joked and danced about,
Mother kissed him, then she cried—
Cried and cried like all git out!

Since John Quit Drinking

By JOHN'S WIFE.



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COSTS NOTHING TO TRY.

If you have a husband, son, brother, father or friend who is a victim of liquor, all you have to do is to send your name and address on the coupon below. You may be thankful as long as you live that you did it.

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Please send me, absolutely free, by return mail, in plain wrapper, so that no one can know what it contains, a trial package of Golden Remedy to prove that what you claim for it is true in every respect.

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Street ....

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I Am Willing to Prove I Can Cure You

To That End I Am Giving Away $10,000 Worth of Medicine

In order to show beyond all doubt that I am in possession of a medicine that will cure kidney trouble, bladder trouble or rheumatism, I will this year give away ten thousand dollars' worth of this medicine, and anyone suffering from these diseases can get a box of it absolutely free. All that is necessary is to send me your address.

I don't mean that you are to use a part of it or all of it and pay me if cured. I mean that I will send you a box of this medicine absolutely free of charge, a gift from me to the Uric Acid sufferers of the world, so I can show them where and how they may be cured. I will not expect payment for this free medicine, nor would I accept it now or later if you sent it. It is free in the real meaning of the word.

For twenty-five years—a quarter of a century—I have been trying to convince the public that I have something genuine, something better than others have for the cure of stubborn, chronic rheumatism, for torturing kidney backache, for annoying calls to urinate. But it is hard to convince people—they try a few things unsuccessfully and give up all hope and refuse to listen to anyone thereafter. Happily, I am in a position now to demonstrate to sufferers at my own expense that I have a medicine that cures these diseases. I don't ask them to spend any money to find out; I don't ask them to believe me, nor even to take the word of reliable people, but all I ask is that they allow me to send them the medicine at my own cost. That is surely fair.

To this end I have set aside ten thousand dollars, which will be used to compound my medicine. Much of it is ready now to be sent out, all of it fresh and standard. There will be enough for all sufferers, though there be thousands of them. And anyone who needs it can get some of it free. But in order that I shall know that you have a disease for which this medicine is intended, I ask you to send me some of your leading symptoms. If you have any of the symptoms in the list printed here you need my medicine and if you will write me I will gladly send you a box of it free with full directions for your use. Look these symptoms over, see which symptoms you have, then write me about as follows: "Dear Dr., I notice symptoms number"—here put down the numbers, give your age, full address, and send it to me. My address is Dr. T. Frank Lynott, 4938 Occidental Building Chicago, Ill.

The ten thousand dollars I am spending for the compounding of my medicine is only a part of the money I am devoting to this cause, for the package of medicine I send you will be fully prepaid at my expense. From any standpoint you view it, YOU incur no expense or obligation. Just tell others who you know are suffering who sent you the medicine that cured you.

I am promising to give away ten thousand dollars' worth of medicine and I will do that. I am promising to send any sufferer who writes me a box of this medicine and full directions free of charge, and I will do that. I can say further that this medicine has been vouched for to the Government as complying in every detail with all requirements. It will stop rheumatism, it will stop pain and backache, it will stop too frequent desire to urinate; it will heal, soothe and strengthen. You will be better in every way for having taken it. There is not an ingredient that can injure, not one but will benefit. All that I ask is that you use it yourself so that you may be personally convinced.

DR. T. FRANK LYNOTT

Who is giving away $10,000 worth of medicine.

Owing to the large number of requests, I have had ten thousand more copies of my medical book printed. This book is new and up to date and contains complete descriptions, symptoms, causes, effects and cures of kidney, bladder and rheumatic diseases. All who write for the free medicine will be sent a copy of this grand illustrated medical book—the largest ever written on these diseases for free and general distribution.

If you need medicine such as I have, if you are anxious to be cured and don't want to spend any money LOOKING for cures, write me. Read the symptoms over and let me hear from you today.

These Are the Symptoms:

1—Pain in the back.
2—Too frequent desire to urinate.
3—Burning or obstruction of urine.
4—Pain or soreness in the bladder.
5—Prostatic trouble.
6—Gas or pain in the stomach.
7—General debility, weakness, dizziness.
8—Pain or soreness under right rib.
9—Swelling in any part of the body.
10—Constipation or liver trouble.
11—Palpitation or pain under the heart.
12—Pain in the hip joint.
13—Pain in the neck or head.
14—Pain or soreness in the kidneys.
15—Pain or swelling of the joints.
16—Pain or swelling of the muscles.
17—Pain and soreness in the nerves.
18—Acute or chronic rheumatism.

Didn't Expect the Impossible.

Sitter—Now you want me to look pleasant, I suppose, eh?

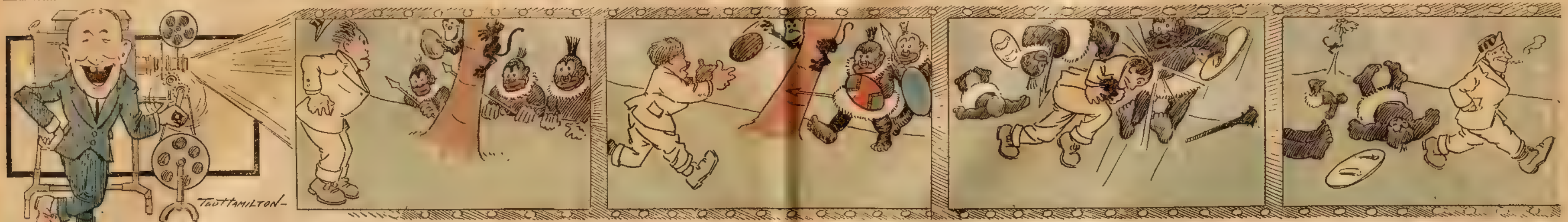
Photographer—Not at all, sir. Just as you are. Our specialty is truthful likeness and natural expression.

OUR MOVING PICTURE SHOW

As a Last Resort.

Mother—I saw you kissing my daughter.

Yes, but only out of desperation. I couldn't think of anything to say to her.



Chick Centerrush—Wow! Savages! And I am unarmed! But say, perhaps that monk will -

'Throw me that cocoanut for a starter just to give me confidence!' Yep! Here it comes, and ——

Now to back the center in the good old college style! [illegible]

Whee! Good stunt. I thought I hadn't lost me form so soon! Well, I must be going!"

Argument From Analogy.

A hungry customer seated himself at a table in a quick lunch restaurant and ordered a chicken pie. When it arrived he raised the lid and sat gazing at the contents intently for a while. Finally he called the waiter.

"Look here, Sam," he said, "what did I order?"

"Chicken pie, sah."

"And what have you brought me?"

"Chicken pie, sah."

"Chicken pie, you black rascal!" the customer replied. "Chicken pie? Why, there's not a piece of chicken in it, and never was."

"Dat's right, boss—dey ain't no chicken in it."

"Then why do you call it chicken pie? I never heard of such a thing."

"Dat's all right, boss. Dey don't have to' be no chicken in a chicken pie. Dey ain't no dog in a dog biscuit, is dey?"

Not Appreciative.

Young Mother (proudly)—Everybody says the baby looks like me.

Bachelor Brother (amazed)—The spiteful things don't say that to your face, do they?

Call Again.

Maid—Please, mum, there's a man at the door with a wooden leg.

Mistress—We don't want any today, thank you, [illegible]

Gallant Cabby.

A very pretty young girl who recently returned from Ireland tells of an encounter with an Irish cabby in Dublin. She had started out from the hotel to do some shopping, but decided instead to make a tour of the city on a jaunting car. Arriving at the first car stand and having selected the smartest looking vehicle, she told the driver that she "wanted to engage him for the day." Pat, never backward in paying homage to beauty, earnestly replied: "Begorra, ma'am, you are welcome. I only wish it was for life!"

Horse Sense.

Friend—What on earth are you doing to that picture?

Great Artist—I am rubbing a piece of raw meat over this rabbit in the foreground. Mrs. De Shoddie will be here this afternoon, and when she sees her pet dog smell of that rabbit she'll buy it.

ROSES AND THORNS.

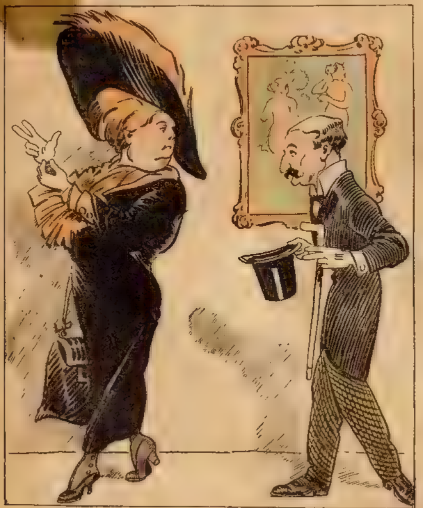
When you embrace a damsel shy
 It seems a sin
To get all lacerated by
 A pesky pin.

Happy Man.

"Susie's getting married."

"Who's the happy man?"

"Her father."



The Lady—Don't tread on my skirt, you brute, and is my hat on straight?

Just Green's Luck.

"If anybody but Greene had told me this I wouldn't have believed it, and I wouldn't have believed him if it had happened to anybody but Greene," said the man. "The other day Greene lost $5. When he got home he began to figure out where he might have lost it. There was a chance every time he took out his pocketbook. He had had his pocketbook in his hand, he remembered, when he left the drug store at One Hundred and Fourth street, and again when he left the florist's at One Hundred and First street.

"In order to expedite the search Greene telephoned the news of his loss to the druggist. The druggist was very accommodating. He promised to put the whole drug store force on the job and to telephone back the result as soon as the premises had been thoroughly seached.

"While waiting for a message from the druggist Greene telephoned to the florist, and received similar assurances of cooperation. In about five minutes the druggist called up. The $5 had been found lying under the edge of a dry goods box on the pavement and would be handed over to Greene.

Greene jumped into his coat and grabbed his hat, but before he got to the door the florist telephoned that the $5 had been found in the ash can just outside his door, and would be held against all comers until Greene called for it. Greene's conscience is of the india-rubber variety, so he had no compunctions about collecting the $5 from both druggist and florist. I'll bet that wouldn't happen to anybody else on earth but Greene.

Her Exact Words.

Housekeeper—How's this? You promised to saw some wood if I gave you a lunch!

Tramp—I recall no such promise, madam.

"The idea! I told you I'd give you a lunch if you'd saw some wood, and you agreed."

"Pardon me, madam. Your exact words were: 'I'll give you a lunch if you saw that wood over there by the gate.'"

"Exactly. That's just what I said."

"Well, madam, I saw that wood over there by the gate as I came in."

Sympathetic.

"I am going to ask your father for your hand."

"Oh, that will be lovely."

"You are glad?"

"Delighted! I will call and bring you flowers every day until you are able to be out again. I have never seen the inside of a hospital."

Didn't Know.

Stranger—I want to find a dive, one of the blind ones. Where shall I go?

Policeman—I don't know. Ask somebody else.

"Whom?"

"Oh, most anybody who isn't a policeman."

Her Diagnosis.

"Have you spoken of our love to your mother as yet?"

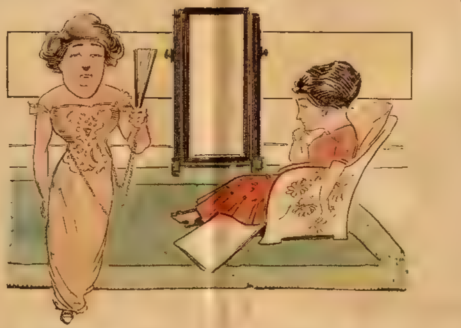
"Not yet," murmured the dear girl. "Mother has noticed that I've been acting queer of late, but she thinks it's just biliousness."

His Impediment.

"Boss, would you help a poor gent wot ain't able to work?"

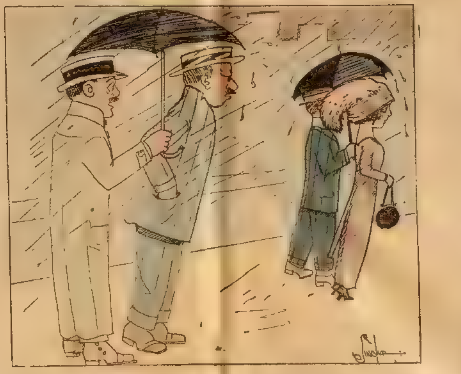
"Why, you look strong. What keeps you from working?"

"Me blooming pride, gent."



The Mother—What makes you think Ferdinand is keeping some dark secret from you?

Mrs. Nubride—I'm sure of it. I've searched his pockets and his desk and his waste-basket and I haven't found anything on him, and if he wasn't concealing it I'd have found it.



"What's the matter, old man?"

"O, a fresh young fellow has had the impertinence to offer his umbrella to my wife! There they are ahead there."

"Why don't you call him down?"

"I guess I'll wait till they get to my house. My wife is wearing her new hat with ostrich plumes."

Two Minds With—

"I defy anybody to beat this for coincidence," said the woman. "The fact that everybody's mind runs on ice in the summer time doesn't make it a bit more remarkable. I had to get down town so early that I didn't have time to straighten up the house, and my husband promised to empty the pan of water under the icebox. About twelve o'clock my placid subway meditations were electrified by the remembrance of that pan. Such an awful fear that he had forgotten it and that the water had soaked through to the ceiling below took possession of me that I said right out loud, and he forty blocks away:

"'Did you empty the pan under the icebox?'

"The man sitting beside me clapped his hand to his forehead with a gesture of despair.

"'No, I'll be blessed if I did,' he said.

"When we realized the significance of the situation the man and I both felt pretty foolish; also we felt doubly anxious about our iceboxes. I postponed all other errands and hurried home. The pan was running over. I would give a good deal to know if the pan under that other icebox had overflowed, too. I'll bet a cooky it did."

Masculine Anxiety.

Teddy's mother had been taken suddenly ill one morning while he was at school. On his return, he was admitted to his mother's room for a few minutes, and found his Aunt Alicia sitting by the bed.

"Now, Teddy," said she, "mother has been very ill, and must not talk."

"Oh, I'm sorry, mother," gasped Teddy.

Mother smiled at him lovingly.

Master Teddy seated himself on a large chair directly opposite, and, after wriggling anxiously around for a minute or two, delivered himself of the following speech:

"Mother dear—now don't try to speak—but if you mean yes, nod your head this way—and if you mean no, shake your head—this way. Have you seen my baseball bat?"

At the Seaside.

Heroic Girl—What has become of that handsome man who cheered so loudly when I rescued the little boy from drowning?

Friend—He is over there on the veranda, proposing to the girl who screamed and fainted.

Made Him Tired.

Manager (wearily)—Wish to go on the stage, eh? After a husband, I suppose?

Fair Applicant—I have a husband.

Manager—Oh, I see. After another one.

Both Made Sacrifices.

My wife often alludes tearfully to the fact that she threw over a millionaire to marry me.

"Mine's just as bad. Her father offered to buy her a French poodle if she'd turn me down."

The Amount.

"You, there, in the overalls!" shouted the cross-examining lawyer, "how much are you paid for telling untruths?"

"Less than you are," retorted the witness, "or you'd be in overalls, too."

Different Methods.

It is claimed that there are as many microbes on a dollar bill as on a fly. But the dollar bill does not make such desperate and continuous efforts to alight on you.

The Girl and the Grouch.

"Have you ever known such a thing as a happy blunder?" the fair maid inquired.

"One at least," replied the grouch. "The near-sighted girl I loved when I was young and foolish mislaid her glasses, and when I proposed to her mistook me for somebody else and said 'Yes, George.'"

"Dear, dear," said the maid, "and which did she marry?"

"She lost us both," said the grouch. "And it served her right. I believe she married both wealth and position, but that has nothing to do with it."

"I guess she was always glad she lost her glasses," said the maid in her innocent way, and the grouch growled good night.

More Evidence.

"Here is more evidence of feminine superiority," said Mrs. Baring-Banners.

"What is it?"

"A hen cackles only when she has laid an egg and a rooster crows merely to attract idle atention."

Why John Didn't Speak.

"Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" asked Priscilla.

"Because," answered John, "I haven't had a chance to get a word in edgewise."

Her Specialty.

She pulled up another chair at a soda-water fountain when her friend joined her. "I'm in such a flurry," she imparted gushingly. "My darling Beatrice graduates tomorrow, you know—and we are so proud of her."

"Oh, yes," said the friend. "Your daughter, to be sure—seems to me I heard she is graduating with high honors."

"Indeed she is," said the proud mother. "She's the smartest one in the family."

"What did she specialize in?" asked the friend as she sipped her orange phosphate.

"Oh, my dear," was the eager reply. "The very sweetest pink chiffon."

Did Some Good.

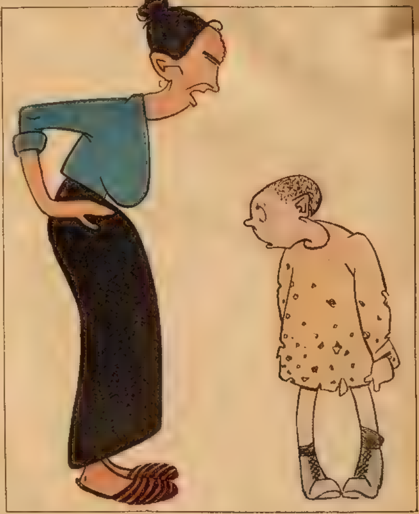
"Now that we've spent so much money fixing up the house, perhaps you won't go away," said her husband, hopefully.

"Oh, yes, John, I will, but," she added encouragingly, "I'll be more cheerful about coming back."

Useful.

"Was your lecture a success?"

"In a way," replied the new statesman. "It served as a pretext for a very lengthy and carefully prepared address by the local celebrity who introduced me."



"Now what have you been doing to tear your shirt like that?"

"It wasn't my fault, ma! We were playing grocery store, and I was the Swiss cheese."

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Trial Package Absolutely Free—Will You Spend a Post-Card for It?

If you are a sufferer from piles, instant relief is yours for the asking, and a speedy permanent cure will follow.

The Pyramid Drug Co., 390 Pyramid Bldg., Marshall, Mich., will send you free, in a plain wrapper, a trial package of Pyramid Pile Cure, the wonderful sure and certain cure for the tortures of this dread disease. Thousands have already taken advantage of this offer, thousands know for the first time in years what it is to be free from the pains, the itching, the awful agony of piles.

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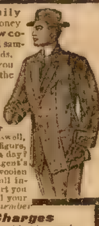

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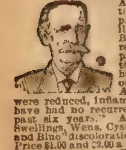

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The Captain of a Derelict

By MASON RAY

JIM SMITH felt uncomfortably nervous. This was his first burglary and every bush in the spacious yard seemed but a deeper shadow of the very black night and the rendezvous of eerie witnesses.

"I'll make a raise o' cash in." His hands gripped. His teeth clenched. "I've asked for work till my throat's sore. I'm d—d near starved. Now I'm going to have a square meal that I don't beg. I'm going to lift enough loose property to buy a ticket to God's country."

Cautiously he advanced to the large stone residence set well back among shrubbery as if to court seclusion. Wasted minutes of investigation showed him that the front and side windows were heavily shuttered and the front door too heavily constructed for panel-cutting. There was neither veranda, fire-escapes or leads from eaves-trough to assist in a climb to the second story. At the rear were two windows breast high and, to his relief, one of these had the slatted blinds thrown back. All this he discovered by softly groping in darkness so intense that it seemed a tangible substance.

"Perhaps I can find some means to lift the window. Glass-cutting's all right for an expert, but I'd sure bungle." He considered the matter a moment, then inserted the blade of an old jackknife beneath the frame with fingers that trembled. Many hours without food had left him frightfully weak and unnerved. As he helplessly fumbled the sash flew up and a veil-covered head leaned above him.

"Is that you, Jim?" whispered a voice. "What kept you? My God, I thought you'd gone back on me! I've been near mad with the worry of it. Here, take this."

To Jim's consternation the dim outline of a woman thrust toward him a suitcase that, because of sheer fright and astonishment, he allowed to drop on the ground with a thud.

"Take care! Aunt Jane'll hear you. Now, help me down."

"You're mistaken. I'm not the man you're expecting. My name's Jim, all right; but it's Jim Smith."

"This is no time for nonsense," the girl whispered angrily. "If you're half a man you'll come along. You'll act square." At the last word she literally deprived him of the power to respond by tumbling forward into his arms. Her weight was that of an ordinarily slim girl, but in his weakened condition it deprived him of breath. His head was confused with the bewilderment occasioned by long fasting.

"Now carry that satchel for me." She thrust it into his right hand. "Come on. Hurry!" With hands clinging to his left arm she hastened his faltering steps toward the silent deserted street. Her impetuosity, insistence, dynamic force urged him forward. There was no existing reason for not assisting the girl with her burden. The brief flare of rage at fate which had driven him to the thought of theft was extinguished. He had now neither strength or desire to rob. For the time he drifted in charge of the stronger personality. Direction or distance was of no consequence. After a moment's rest he would speak.

"You're two hours late," chided the girl. "Serve us right if Reverend Holswade's given up and gone to bed. Do hurry!"

"I tell you you've blundered. I'm not what you think. I'm—"

"I don't care. Nobody could treat me worse than Aunt Kate. I've been a slave. She's no blood relative. She hates me. I'd rather die than go back."

"You don't know what I am," he insisted. "I'm a tramp, a hobo carpenter out of work. I have neither friends nor home. I haven't a red cent."

"I'll tell you what you are," she said with fierce anger. "You're a white-livered sneak, a crawfish. You want to back out. You've found that I have nothing, will never have anything but the wages of a servant. That I'm only an ill-paid maid living in the house of my stepmother's shrew of an aunt. I've suspected you were sick of the deal. But you shan't leave me. Do you hear? You'll keep your word."

Through the black night she led him at a swift pace around a corner, past the ghostly outlines of a church. She moved with the freedom of one who thoroughly knew the neighborhood. Finally she paused at the gate of an unpretentious residence. At their left rose the jagged crest of trees in a park. Back of the park were the tracks of the Union Pacific and the low-built, red-painted depot with its area of velvet lawn and well kept flower beds that delighted the eyes of wayworn travelers. Several days before Jim had arrived at the spot on the brace rods of a dusty freight. The flowers in a spot usually hideous with the grime of traffic enticed him to once more try his luck. But he had tested the charity of the [illegible] and prosperous young city without avail. Now as his unknown companion rang the doorbell he ruminated.

"If I bolt she'll think I'm that other Jim—the hound who's skipped. A light will tell her the truth. I'll wait."

Almost immediately the door opened. An aged man with benevolent countenance stood before them holding a small lamp. Behind him Jim could see a tiny hall from which rose a narrow stair.

"We've kept you up late," apologized the girl. "But now that we're here, please hasten. We're in time for the midnight express."

"Never mind the waiting," disclaimed the old man. "An hour's extra reading is welcome. But my wife and the hired girl are doubtless sound asleep. Step into my study while I call them. We must have them down as witnesses."

Without another word he turned to ascend the stair, lighted by a reading lamp and evidently intended for both a reception room and study.

"Now," Jim said, confronting the girl, "you'll believe me. You'll see I'm not the man you want."

His curious gaze beheld a slim, brown-haired woman whose age might be twenty, and whose wholesome, comely face turned ashen, whose clear gray eyes widened with horror, and whose full red lips parted with a gasp of despair when she saw before her an utter stranger.

"My God, he's left me, the brute, the blackguard! I feared it. I might have known. And now I can't go back. My God, I can't go back. What shall I do?" So exquisite was her anguish that she failed to wonder at this man's presence. Nothing occupied her half-crazed brain but the agony of her desertion. Heartbroken she sank into a chair sobbing, with hands covering her convulsed features.

As the man stood watching he forgot his hunger, failed to remember his feud against society, no longer realized his physical weakness. He saw nothing but the suffering of a human being and that being a woman. His heart went out to her in compassion. With a stride he was beside her, had placed a hand on her heaving shoulder.

"Listen," said he; "tonight I intended to become a thief. I planned to wrest from wealth what was denied me for labor. But, thank God, you saved me from attempting my first burglary. If in return I can aid you my life is at your service. It's a worthless gift but such as it is it's yours. What can I do?"

"Nothing," the girl told him. "Don't you understand? I came here to me married. The brute was deserted me provided me with tickets for Oakland, purchased with my savings. He even left with me the license for our wedding. He was to come for me at the earliest moment I could escape. But he's deceived me and cast me off. Now I'm friendless and homeless. I can't go back. I can only die."

Again she covered her face while sobs shook her slender form, dry, tearless sobs that echo wordless despair. Jim, staring down at her helplessly, was irresistibly drawn toward his fellow sufferer. Fate had treated both unkindly. His bewildered brain was racked for a solution of her problem.

"He was a cur, that man. "You're well rid of him. I'm ashamed to own the same name. But I swear I've kept it honest till this night. No one living can call Jim Smith a thief or liar. And if I'd do instead o' him —"

Wonderingly the girl choked back her gasping sobs, and for the first time regarded her strangely acquired escort with perceiving vision. She saw a man of ordinary height in threadbare garments. His haggard face was well-featured and kindly in expression. Fair hair clustered about his temples and mild blue eyes met her glance openly. Unmistakably she looked in the face of a clean-hearted, honest man, even if he stood before her self-condemned.

"You're a good man. You are kind. I don't believe you're a thief."

"Until tonight I've lived straight. For months I've begged for work and starved. Tonight I was desperate. I nearly broke the laws of God and man. From this hour I'll live right whatever happens. But if you'll take my name I'll have courage to get on. That's been the whole trouble; I lacked resolution. I've been easily cast down. With you to inspire effort I know I'd succeed.' Listen," he urged when she tried to interrupt, 'you say you have the license made out for that Jim Smith. Let it serve its purpose. Marry me and let me show you that I'll make good."

The girl gazed into his eyes as if she would read his soul. Her mind reverted to the conditions from which she had fled and to which she could never return. Sheltered by this marriage she could seek employment and wait while this blue-eyed man prepared a home. Instinctively she trusted him. Instinctively she knew he spoke the truth when he admitted lack of courage. She could nerve him to manly effort. Womanlike she longed to protect him from himself. Moreover, she would triumph over the man who had put upon her a grievious slight. Before she could speak the old pastor returned to the room accompanied

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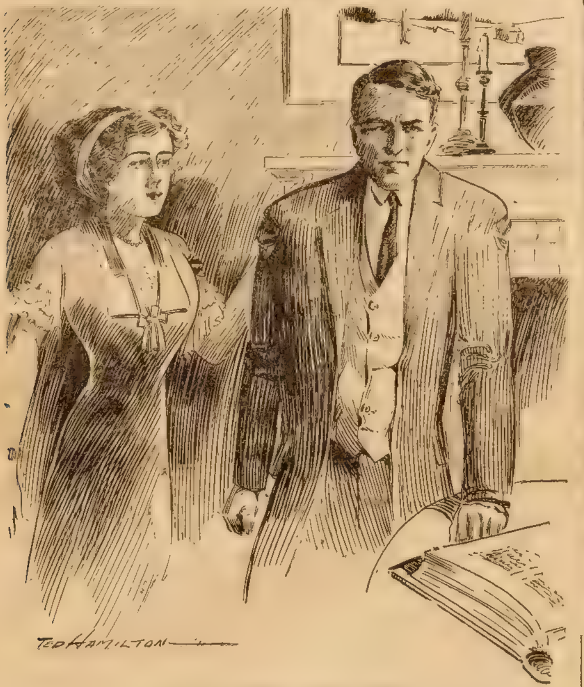
by the two women hastily attired and drowsy with interrupted sleep.

"There's a slight mistake in that license." The man suddenly assumed control. "The age should be twenty-eight. But as my residence has been constantly changing the given one will do." He received the paper from the girl's hesitating hand and coolly appropriated the minister's pen and ink while he found the other Jim's age—the calculating age of thirty-five—and changed the figures to correspond with his own years. "Tomorrow have the clerk correct his record," he told the woman, whose name appeared in the license as Jean Douglas. "And now," said he to the clergyman, "we're ready."

Like one in a trance Jean stood by the strangely substituted Jim Smith and uttered the marriage vows. With newly awakened manhood and heart swelling with tenderness, Jim swore to protect and love the girl who had appealed to his chivalry. Then, while the white-haired clergyman busied himself at filling in the marriage contract his aged wife and the maid served cake and sweetened wine. To Jim this old-world courtesy was a godsend. His thorough appreciation of the repast almost startled the good wife, and Jean, suspecting the truth, managed to transfer her cake to his plate and her wine to his glass. Color once more tinged his careworn face, his blue eyes sparkled with reviving strength. Shyly his bride met his admiring gaze and the red lips curved in a smile, the lifting shadow of a lightened heart.



I do not believe you're a thief.

Presently, Jean talked aside with the pastor's wife, then the strangely united couple passed out into the tiny porch of the parsonage.

"I'm to pass the night here," Jean told him. "In the morning I'll seek work. As for you, you take this ticket bought for the other Jim, the scoundrel, and look for an opening in the West—take up land and build a cabin. When it's ready I'll come." Without thought, without hesitation she—the stronger character—had assumed control of their joint destiny. By a law of nature she was in command—had, by an astounding trick of fate, become the captain of a stanch but hepless derelict.

"I'll win out," promised the man. "For your sake, Jean, I'll secure a home. At sunset I'd have given my soul for a meal. Now I have the strength and courage to gain wealth, honest wealth and it's you that inspires me. The thought that there's a woman owning my name, calling herself my wife, will bring success. God, it seems impossible! I was a friendless castaway, almost a thief. Now I have a wife, am going to the land of promise to make a home. It's wonderful! It's witchery!"

"It's the guiding hand of one who counts the sparrows," whispered the girl. "I was more wretched than you. Rather than return to that house of hate and slavery I'd have perished by my own hand. Now, we'll have each other. We'll plan by letters for a home. Think of it!"

"Day and night I'll think of it," he said earnestly. "There shall be a latticed porch——"

"And climbing roses," interposed the girl.

"And sunny rooms, and big armchairs and a lamp with a red shade——"

"And a yard with darling chickens," dreamed the girl.

"And acres of green pasture and cows and horses," planned the last apostle of the great Greeley.

"And it will all be home, and home is heaven," said the girl.

* * * * *

Two years later the young couple were seated by a red-shaded lamp in their own cozy sittingroom. The cottage was small, white-painted, and possessed a tiny latticed porch overrun by a climbing rose. About the modest building were the widespreading acres of a frontier claim that Jim's strong hands had partly cleared and planted. Roseate promise of boundless prosperity filled their horizon. The man's placid countenance had added lines of deepening character. The woman's strong personality provided a shield against discouragement. They were, in truth, the two parts of one perfect whole. The man's toil-hardened fingers grasped a pen with which he was making entries in his carefully kept book of farm accounts. As he wrote the last item his eyes lifted to his wife's sweet, comely face, bent above a bit of sewing. The sight moved him to passionate expression.

"Jean, my darling," he said softly, "you blessed captain of a storm-tossed derelict."

Wanted Prize Money.

E. Phillips Oppenheim was talking in New York about literary popularity.

"Those writers who are unpopular," said Mr. Oppenheim, "impute all the big successes to advertising. They give the author himself no credit; the credit goes to the publisher's advertisements."

Mr. Oppenheim lighted a fresh cigarette.

"And that reminds me," he said, "in its absurdity of a blacksmith of whom Whistler made an etching.

"The blacksmith, some months later, came up to town and called at Whistler's studio in Chelsea.

"'Hello, blacksmith!' said Whistler. 'What brings you here?'

"'Why,' said the blacksmith, 'I heard as how a prize had been awarded for that there portrait you made of me, and I've come for the cash.'"

Hopelessly Bald.

"Ben," said his friend, waking up from a reverie in which he had been gazing abstractedly at the shiny expanse of Ben's skating rink for flies, "is there nothing you could do for your baldness?"

Ben, by the way, is only 40.

"No, lad," he replied with decision. "Fifteen years ago I was courting strong, and I tried lots of things. But about that time t' Prince o' Wales—Edward, you know—came to open t' new hospital, and as soon as I saw him liftin' his hat t' crowd I said: 'Ben, my lad, thy can give it up as a bad job and save thy brass. If ther' was owt 'at 'ud cure a bald head they'd h' cured his.'"

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Little Stories

No Provocation.

After he had roughly shaken off the head of the third belated passenger who had sought repose on his shoulder the stout man proclaimed in a voice loud enough to be heard by everybody in the car that the next time anybody went to sleep with his head pillowed on his shoulder he would give that head a good punching, that's what he would do

The stout man's wife said, "Sh-sh-sh, James. Don't get so violent."

"Violent?" said the stout man. "I've a right to be violent. I'm no pillow. I'm no featherbed. If anybody thinks I am, just let him come on and I'll show him."

At the next station two women came in and found seats near the stout man Presently the younger and prettier of the two began to nod. Lower and lower drooped her head, and soon it found a substantial resting place. The stout man sat still; so very still did he sit that his wife wondered what had happened to him. She leaned over and looked past his bulky frame to find out. Her face flushed.

"Why, James," she said indignantly. "Don't you remember what you said a little while ago about punching heads? There's a head on your shoulder now."

"Is there?" said the stout man meekly. "I hadn't noticed it."

It was apparent then that if there was any head punching to be done somebody besides James would have to do it, also it was apparent that somebody was perfectly willing to undertake the job.

"James," said the stout man's wife significantly.

He wriggled uneasily until the head was gently dislodged; then the stout man and his wife changed places.

It Didn't Work.

"The late Andrew Gernand of Baltimore was an inventor who devoted his life to perpetal motion, pausing by the way to invent for one son a corn reaper that brought in $1,000,000 and for another a corn sheller that netted an almost equal fortune."

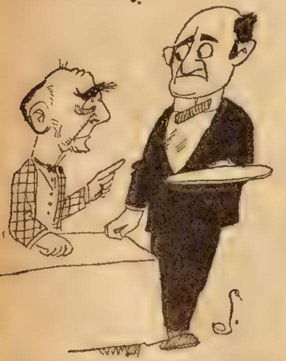
The speaker, an official of the patent office in Washington, shook his head sadly.

"Once," he resumed, I ventured to take the brilliant Gernand to task. I told him he was wasting his time on perpetual motion. I said that there ought to be a law forbidding all perpeual motion work.

"'Do ybu think,' said he, 'that a law forbidding work on perpetual motion would do much good?'

"'I am sure it would,' said I.

"'And yet you must remember,' said Mr. Gernand with a twinkle in his eye, 'that there was a law forbidding apples in the Garden of Eden.'"



Nervous Customer—Will that pancake be long?

Waiter—No, sir; it will be round.

"No Washing."

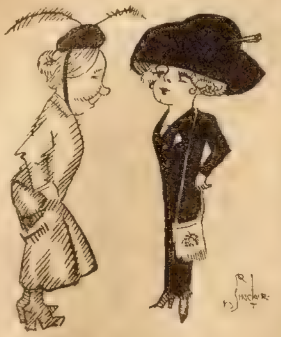
At a revival meeting in a Methodist church near Cincinnati a number of converts were secured, and several of them requested that instead of sprinkling they be baptized by immersion.

The Methodist church was provided with a baptismal font, but not with a pool, immersions being infrequent among its accessions to membership. So one of the deacons, anxious that the new members should not be disappointed in their wholly laudable desire to be immersed, constituted himself a committee to call upon the ruling spirit of the Baptist church—not the pastor but a rather haughty gentleman who held the Methodists in small favor, and who was slightly jealous of the success of their revival. The deacon explained the circumstances to this pillar and asked as a favor that the Methodist converts might be immersed in the Baptist pool.

"What? Immerse Methodists in our pool?" ejaculated the Baptist leader.

"Certainly. We would appreciate the kindness very much, and——"

"Well, you go back and tell your church that our church isn't taking in any washing!"—Life



Mrs. Dingley—When your house took fire did Archie, you fiance, act heroically Alice?"

"Yes, indeed. Why, when mamma tied a pillow around him and threw him out the window he never quivered."

The Roving Bee.

James J. Corbett found one of his friends in the throes of thought the other day The friend was contemplating giving up a fat salaried position to take an independent chance. Whenever he thought of the profits ahead if he made good as a business man he glowed like an oil lamp. Whenever he thought of resigning that sure envelope at the end of the week he became solid ice to the midriff.

"When I first began boxing in California," said Corbett, "my father used to lecture me. 'Stick to the job in the bank, Jimmy, b'y,' said he. 'It's the fine salary you do be getting there, and as long as you live you can kape that fine job at the desk. Remember, "a rolling stone gathers no moss."'

"But I kept on fighting," Corbett said. "And father kept on panning me. Finally I fought with John L. Sullivan, and you know what happened. When I got home I carelessly peeled a 1,000-dollar bill off a roll as big as a cabbage and tossed it over to dad.

"'Just a little pipe money for you, father,' I said. 'Part of what I made in my last fight.' Father's grin began at the corners and kept on expanding. His eyes twinkled.

"'Ah, Jimmy, b'y,' said he, 'it's the roving bee that gets the honey.'"

He Had Hopes.

Owen Wister, in addition to being an author, has acquired some celebrity as a wit. He was being shaved in a St. Louis hotel, while returning from a trip to the West some time ago, and the barber, who was attending to his needs, apparently had been out the night before. His hand was very shaky, and several times the author winced.

"Will you have anything on your face when I get through?" the barber inquired, when the ordeal was almost over.

"I can't tell yet," mumbled Wister, "but I hope to have part of my nose."

President and Boy Scouts.

When the "Boy Scouts" movement was at its height, three of the youngsters journeyed from Baltimore to Washington to be introduced to the President. When Mr. Taft shook hands with them one of the little fellows stuck out his left hand.

"Why do you give me your left hand?" asked the President.

"That's the way us Boy Scouts shake hands," said the boy with pride.

"Well," commented Mr. Taft dryly, "the sooner us Boy Scouts learn better the nicer us Boy Scouts will be"

A Good Joke.

A man and a woman boarded a street car together, the woman carrying a heavy suitcase. The man took the only vacant seat, leaving the woman standing.

An indignant passenger remonstrated, saying, "You ought to be ashamed to let that woman stand.'

The other looked at him in astonishment

"That's a good joke on you," he answered. "Why, she's my wife."

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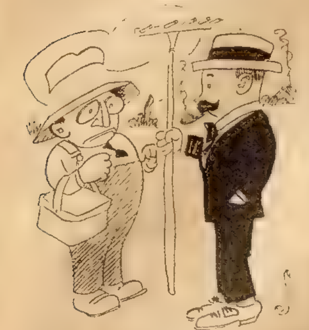
Held Back.

Bildad is very proud of his prowess and upon occasion is a trifle quarrelsome because of his assumed powers with his fists. It was rumored that he and Dubbleigh had had a near-fight at a little dinner recently given, and Tompkins, desirous of getting at the truth of the matter, broached the subject at the club.

"Yes," said Bildad, getting very red in the face, "Dubbleigh and I nearly came to blows. I wanted to lick him then and there, and I'd have done it, too, if I hadn't been grabbed from behind and held back."

"Really?" said Tompkins. "Who was it grabbed you from behind and held you back?"

"Dubbleigh," said Bildad gloomily.



Suburbanite A—What's good to kill bugs on vegetables?

Suburbanite B—Well, if your vegetables are anything like mine, just let em alone—the vegetables will kill them.

His Choice.

Mrs. Youngwedd had been taking cooking lessons through a correspondence course.

Although there was a marked improvement in the culinary department of the Youngwedd homestead, the husband lost no opportunity for poking fun at his wife's cooking. One morning, just as he was leaving for business, she asked:

"My dear, what would you like for dinner this evening?"

"Well," he replied smilingly, "we'll have lesson four with exception 'c,' a little of lesson nine and perhaps the postscript of lesson twelve for dessert."

Hard to Please.

There is in Washington an old "grouch" whose son was graduated from Yale. When the young man came home at the end of the first term, he exulted in the fact that he stood next to the head of his class. But the old gentleman was not satisfied.

"Next to the head!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean? I'd like to know what you think I'm sending you to college for? Next to the head! Why aren't you at the head, where you ought to be?"

At this the son was much crestfallen; but upon his return he went about his work with such ambition that at the end of the term he found himself in the much coveted place. When he went home that year he felt very proud. It would be great news for the old man.

When the announcement was made, the father contemplated his son for a few minutes in silence; then, with a shrug, he remarked:

"At the head of the class, eh? Well, that's a fine commentary on Yale University!"

The Word Too Much.

The curtain had fallen on the performance of the amateur theatrical company, and compliments, wise and otherwise, were flying freely. The well meaning young man approached his hostess.

"You played the heroine's part magnificently, Mrs. Portleigh," he said gushingly, as he bowed before her.

"You're too kind, Mr. Rashleigh," replied the good lady, who would never see forty again. "But I'm afraid you're only flattering. A young and pretty woman should really have taken the part."

Then the zealous guest overdid it.

"Ah, madam," he sighed, "with your skill you proved quite the contrary."

The Length of Time.

When Lawrence Barrett's daughter was married, Stuart Robson sent a check for $5,000 to the bridegroom. The comedian's daughter, Felicia Robson, who attended the wedding, conveyed the gift.

"Felicia," said her father upon her return, "did you give him the check?"

"Yes, father," answered the daughter.

"What did he say?" asked Robson.

"He didn't say anything," replied Miss Felicia, "but he shed tears."

"How long did he cry?"

"Why, father, I didn't time him. I should say, however, that he wept fully a minute."

"Fully a minute," mused Robson. "Why, daughter, I cried an hour after I signed it."

The Same Hole.

An inexperienced young fellow was called upon to make a speech at a banquet at which Speaker Cannon was present. In fact, the Speaker sat next to the young man.

"Gentlemen," began the young fellow, "my opinion is that the generality of mankind in general is disposed to take advantage of the generality of——"

The Speaker grabbed the boy by the arm, pulling him down to him, said:

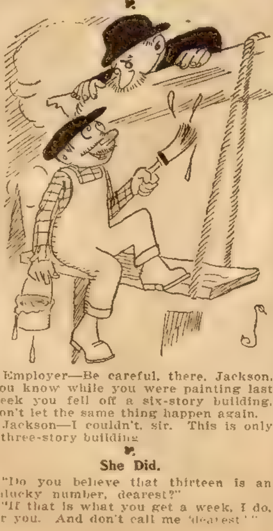
"Sit down, son. You are coming out of the same hole you went in."

In a Nutshell.

Senator LaFollette, himself one of the most direct of speakers, has a natural horror of speeches of the rambling, boring kind.

In a recent session a certain Senator, after elaborating in a speech of two hours a statement that would have been better made in a speech of two minutes, concluded: "And that's the situation, gentlemen, in a nutshell."

"Gracious," said Senator LaFollette, sotto voce, "what a nut!"



Employer—Be careful, there, Jackson. You know while you were painting last week you fell off a six-story building. Don't let the same thing happen again.

Jackson—I couldn't, sir. This is only a three-story building.

She Did.

"Do you believe that thirteen is an unlucky number, dearest?"

"If that is what you get a week, I do, for you. And don't call me 'dearest.'"

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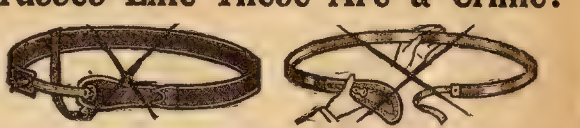
Trusses Like These Are a Crime!



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We have so much faith in the Cluthe Truss—we have seen it work wonders for so many others—that we want to make one especially for your case and let you wear it at our risk.

We'll give you plenty of time to test it—if it doesn't keep your rupture from coming out, when you are working and at all other times—if it doesn't put an end to the trouble you've heretofore had with your rupture—if you don't get better right away—then the truss won't cost you a cent.

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In **addition** to **holding** the rupture, the Cluthe Truss or Cluthe Automatic Massager is constantly giving a **soothing, strengthening massage** to the weak ruptured parts.

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It explains the dangers of operations and why they don't always cure to stay cured.

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TRANSPLANTED.

John Bowditch, botanical case on shoulder, hurried along the woodpath to test his pet experiment. For years he had been filling hidden places in these Maine woods with foreign plants which, left to work out their own salvation for a time, he later revisited with almost fatherly delight. Today he would see how some Scotch heather had weathered a year of New England.

Suddenly with a distant rustling of leaves, a girl came through the trees, following the winding path toward him. John Bowditch, 40 years old, ignorer of women, saw only that the gleam of her crimson dress in the light of the September afternoon was not unpleasing.

Stepping aside as if to examine a tall sumac, he was leaving the narrow path to her, when his eyes fell on a bunch of flowers in her hand. He scowled. His near-sighted eyes strained at her. She had not seen him. He must get a better look unobserved.

He slipped behind the shelter of the sumac. Now she was only ten steps away—and he could see. It was his heather. She played with the flowers, half-caressing the tiny, pink sprays. There was a dreamy, sentimental look on her face that roused an evil temper in the man of science.

He glared at her as she passed, half-minded to protest, but the right second lost, stood looking angrily after her retreating figure, soon hidden by the curve of the path.

Turning, he plunged ahead through the tangle of asters and goldenrod, with frequent stumbles over twisted roots He was too cross to watch his feet. It was science vs. sentiment, and science seemed to have the worst of it.

Before him in a clearing lay the heather patch. He stooped over it, smoothing the plants with loving fingers. Broken stems, empty spaces told their story. The roots would live on; for that he was thankful, but for the present his experiment must remain incomplete.

Rising with a shrug, he tried to turn his mind to the other plant life around; but for once even botany had lost its charm. Science and John Bowditch were out of tune, for he stamped homeward in disgust.

Meanwhile Scotch Mysie Cameron rapturously arranged her plunder in a bowl. The very touch of its tiny, prickly leaves made her realize how the days of her visit to her American aunt were flying and awoke in her a sudden home-hunger.

But how came heather into Maine woods to make a Scotch girl homesick? The puzzle of it haunted her. Her neighbors had no knowledge of the plant. One at last suggested that she ask that odd botanist, Bowditch, who lived alone on the hill, and impulsively she wrote him a note of eager inquiry.

John Bowditch next day grunted over it and tossed it onto his crowded desk. But each time he glanced up from his microscope he caught sight of its white back. Bother the thing! Impatiently he turned it over.

"She writes a fair hand—but Cæsar, what an ending! 'I, too, am a stranger from Scotland!' Sentimental! Sickeningly sentimental! Well, she's got my heather. How the dickens shall I keep her from my other stuff out there, and from babbling all over town to set people hunting!"

At last he wrote her briefly, asking her to show him the heather in growth. Before the time came, he thought, he might contrive something to tell her. Meanwhile, anticipating such boredom, he felt himself truly a martyr to science.

Two days later he kept his appointment with her. He felt oddly out of place in his familiar woods as he followed her swishing skirts along the path. Serenely unconscious of his embarrassed silence, the girl supplied a friendly chatter, until triumphantly she stooped over the disputed patch.

"Is that anything but heather, Mr. Bowditch?"

He took the spray she handed him and examined it.

Conscious of her scrutiny, he pulled scientifically at the leaves. Finally with an air of congratulation and surprise he faced her.

"It is Calluna vulgaris, I vow. How unexpectedly plants do turn up! Migrating birds, a hundred different mediums carry them. I'd rather not commit myself to any theory here. Suppose we consider it one of nature's experiments, and watch the result."

He flushed a little under her pleased unquestioned assent. He had a guilty consciousness which he hoped did not show. Yet as he stood looking awkwardly down at the heather in its glow of autumn sunlight, and at the bright girl-face above it, he somehow felt glad to be there. Less shyly he began to speak again of the plants.

"First of all, we must keep this now to ourselves," he said decidedly. "The flowers are small and off the beaten track. Probably only your Scotch eyes could have noticed them in a dozen years. Shall we pledge ourselves to keep the secret?"

With mock solemnity Mysie stretched out her hand to him, and he shook it as solemnly.

"Of course," she added, "I shall walk here now and then."

"Oh, naturally," John agreed, "I shall keep an eye on it myself."

Walking home, Mysie talked of Scotland and the moors. John was usually silent; but when he had left her at her gate he halted in the road in the wonder of swift realization. He had not been bored.

A week later rambling near the clearing he caught a glimpse of crimson through the trees. He had volunteered to keep an eye on the heather. He did at once—until the sudden autumn darkness forced him to see Mysie home.

At their third meeting, for variety, he guided her by old logging roads strange to her. The charm of the old companionship laid an unsuspected spell upon them both.

Through winter snows and February thaws they found excuse for meeting—always under the open sky, oftenest in the woods, where John Bowditch's knowledge opened a new world for the girl. He taught her the use of snowshoes, and on them they followed together the tracks of the tiny, shy wood-inhabitants.

Before spring winds blew, they were tried friends—"chums," Mysie secretly phrased it with occasional wonder. As for John, he hardly realized Mysie's girlhood in his delight in her sympathetic company.

One day when they had been roaming the woods for violets he had found his comrade unusually quiet. As they reached the clearing they stopped a moment by the faithful patch of heather which had braved the winter storms

"It is hard to realize," Mysie said with a catch in her voice, "that I'm not to see it blooming."

"Why not?" John demanded sharply.

"They say now I must go home in June. My sister is to be married. They need me."

Mysie's lips trembled. She hardly dared glance at the kind, studious, familiar face. She anticipated its look of pain. The look was there—and with it the amazement of a man who leaps to a sudden understanding of himself.

"Mysie," his voice rang deep, intense. "I need you more. That is—I mean—no, I mean just that! I cannot let you go!"

Mysie dropped her violets in a sudden gesture of dismay—yet on the instant felt that this all was strangely right. John Bowditch went on with an excitement new to him.

"I've known we were good friends; I didn't know how much more. You Scotch girl, you've grown as deep into my life as that heather into the soil! If you are torn out it will leave a great, empty place. But—"

He looked at her and paused. Perhaps he really saw her fresh, girlish beauty for the first time. A shadow settled on his face; he went on in a different tone.

"I'm talking foolishly. I'm twice your age. My home is here, miles enough from your dear Scotland. It was selfish. Please forget it all."

But Mysie was reaching out both hands to him across the heather.

"Oh, John, John! Can't you see that I'm transplanted for good? If you root me up, I may wither—die! I didn't want to go back—only I hadn't any excuse to stay."

As they walked home through the rich May sunlight, stirred by the pulse of new life around and within them. John stopped short.

"Mysie," he said earnestly, "it's no use. You mustn't love me. I'm a fraud, a——"

She faced him, suddenly white.

"You didn't suspect," he went on doggedly. "You were too truthful to dream I could cheat. I planted that heather—an experiment. That's why I told you to keep it secret. I'm ashamed, sorry. But how could I foresee all this?"

Then in wonder at the radiant laughter of her eyes: "Dearest, how could I dream it would lead me to you?"

She smiled with loving mockery and leaned tantalizingly toward him.

"Is that why you're so sorry for it, John?" she asked.

❧ ❧ ❧

Oddities of Science.

Experiments in France have shown that a natural turf is an excellent material from which to form beds for filtering of sewage. A volume of between three and four cubic meters of sewage can be purified every day for every square meter of the surface of the turf. A turf filter that has been in use for some time shows no diminution of efficiency.

In order to protect the interior of ships from the humidity caused by condensation upon the metallic walls during sudden changes of temperature, the Italian marine has experimented with a kind of hygroscopic varnish, or coating, the essential compound of which is ground cork. This is consolidated by pressure with copal and litharge, and applied to the walls.

In one minute, in a state of rest, the average man takes into his lungs about 48.8 cubic inches of air. In walking he needs 97.6 cubic inches; in climbing, 140.3 cubic inches; in riding at a trot, 201.3 cubic inches, and in long distance running, 347.7 cubic inches.

❧ ❧ ❧

Brevities.

In Tibet a sign of politeness on meeting a person is to hold up the clasped hands and stick out the tongue.

Most valuable feathers are those of the mirasol, a bird of Argentina. They are worth about $1,100 a pound.

Perfume of the nutmeg flower is said by some naturalists to have an intoxicating effect on small birds.

ECONOMIZE

A THOUSAND DOLLARS, we will say, is your yearly income. Maybe it's $600 or $800 or $2000—but $1000 will do for an example. Now suppose that out of this $1000 you spend $600 in a year and put $400 in the bank. That means $400 saved, doesn't it? But suppose you start buying the necessities of life in an economical way like 2,000,000 other people are doing. Suppose that this year you cut your expenses down to $400 and put $600 in the bank. That means $600 saved, doesn't it? You can do it, you can cut one-third off of your living expenses and it's the easiest, most agreeable thing to do that there is. Send to us for one or more of these books which contain the articles you are going to buy this winter. You will find as all of our 2,000,000 satisfied customers have, that our prices are the very lowest and the quality of our merchandise is the very highest. The reason our prices are low is this—we buy in tremendous quantities and trim down the price on each article to the lowest possible figure. We give you the advantage of these extensive and economical business methods.

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17 Baby Carriages
18 Men's Fur Coats
19 Sewing Machines
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23 Stoves & Ranges
24 Underwear Samples
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26 Bicycles—Motorcycles
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Rainy weather has no terrors for you if you have a good raincoat. You rather enjoy splashing around in the wet, when you are warm and dry. Damp—rainy—snowy weather will soon be here. Better get your raincoat now and be ready for it.

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Pickled Peppers

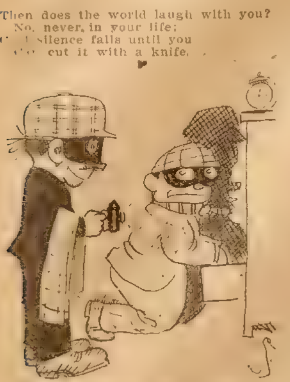
A FALSEHOOD.

"Laugh, and the world laughs with you,"
  I find is most untrue.
Just take a single instance,
  And you will share my view.

You tell a funny story
  Unto a group of friends;
You reach the point [illegible] it—
  And snigger when it ends.

Then does the world laugh with you?
  No, never, in your life;
A silence falls until you
  Can cut it with a knife.

* * *



First Burglar—I'll bet de guy didn't give less'n $50 fer dis suit.

Second Burglar—Say, it's shameful de way dat woolen trust robs folks.

His Identity.

Robert Miller, a druggist, who recently bought out a store, is telling of an odd occurrence which puts the laugh on himself.

On the first night of his ownership, a shabbily dressed man, about 65 years old, came into the shop, walked to the gas lighter and ignited the tobacco in a dirty clay pipe. After blowing a huge cloud of foul-smelling smoke about the place, he walked out without making a purchase or speaking a word.

The druggist was a bit nettled at the man's air of familiarity, but imagined he might be some crony of the former proprietor and had not learned of the transfer of the business. When the little old man appeared every night for a week and repeated his pipe-lighting performance, however, Miller decided to remonstrate, and stepped in front of the intruder as he was about to go.

"Who are you, anyhow?" he demanded.

"Why!" exclaimed the little old man, in apparent amazement, "don't you know who I am?"

"No!" almost shouted the druggist.

"Sure you ought to know me by this time," was the reply. "I am the man that comes in every night and lights me pipe."

He Fooled Her.

Mrs. Smart's new servant was an acquisition. He was Chinese, and his name was John. He could cook like a dream. He could wash like a steam laundry. In fact, the only thing in which he really failed was in answering the front door bell.

This one failing, however, proved decidedly awkward, especially as Mrs. Smart was giving an at-home on the morrow. She imparted to her Celestial slave the most rigid instructions regarding his duties, showing him how Europeans opened doors and announced visitors, and making him show her into her own drawingroom.

On the morrow she was startled to hear the bell ring some half-hour before her visitors were expected. Hurriedly putting the finishing touches to her toilet, she flew downstairs. But where was John? The bell rang a second time. She ran to the head of the stairs, and whispered "John!" Then she called "John!" Then she shouted "John!" And then, in despair, she rushed to the door and opened it herself.

"You foolee me yesterday," smiled John complacently from the mat, "so me foolee you today."

Her Obedience.

An old lawyer had instructed his client, accused of theft, to weep whenever he struck the desk with his hand. In the ardor of his plea he forgot and struck the desk at an inauspicious moment.

His client promptly fell to sobbing with much energy, and the judge turned upon her.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked.

"He told me to cry as often as he struck the table," said the woman, lifting a pair of large dry eyes to the judge's face as she put down her handkerchief.

A laugh ran around the room, but the unabashed lawyer saw his opportunity.

"It is not possible," he said, when the laughter had subsided, "that any one here can reconcile the idea of crime with such candor and simplicity as this."

Proved a Quack.

Stranger—Beg pardon, sir, but can you direct me to the office of Dr. Curall?

Dr. Oleschool—Sir? Am I to understand that you intend to risk your precious life with Dr. Curall? He's a quack, sir—a quack.

"Indeed! In what way?"

"In the first place, sir, he advertises in the newspapers."

"Yes, that's how I heard of him."

"And, worse still, he's one of the 'no cure no pay' sort of quacks. Yes, sir."

"'No cure no pay' is his motto, I believe."

"Yes, sir. Just think what a quack he must be! Won't take a cent pay until you're cured."

"So he says."

"I see you admit it. Walk right into my office, my dear sir, and I'll treat you in the regulation way and charge you the regulation fee whether I cure you or not."

Why He Laughed.

"You know," said Silas, as he drove Mr. Commuter to the station, "them there seventeen-year locusts is curious beasts. Oh, I've watched them, I know their ways. They comes up out of the ground and they makes for the nearest tree, and they climbs up the trunk till they gets to the leaves. Leaves is what they're after!

"'Tother day I seen a man standin' in the road, a-lookin' up at a telegraph pole and a-laughin' to beat the band.

"'Wot yer laughin' at, friend?' says I.

"'See all them dom seventeen-year-old locusts, a-scuttlin' and a-scurryin' up that there pole?' says he.

"'Yes,' says I, 'what of it?'

"'I'm just a-thinkin',' he says, a-most doublin' up laughin', 'what an April fool it'll be for them when they gets to the top!'"

The Explanation.

"Waiter!" roared the diner.

The waiter looked intently out of the window, pretending he hadn't heard. The diner had already complained of the chop and his chips and his napkin, and Alphonse had had about enough of him.

"Waiter!"

Reluctantly Alphonse moved over.

"Just look at the color of this water, waiter," growled the diner. "It's not fit to drink."

Critically the waiter raised the glass to the light and examined it. Then, triumphantly, he set it down again.

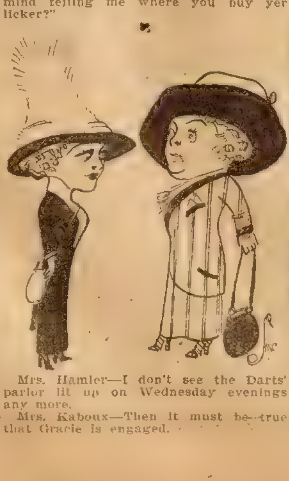
"No, sir; you're deceiving yourself, sir," he said, kindly. "That water's perfectly all right, sir. It's the glass what's dirty!"

Wanted Information.

The teacher was demonstrating the powerful corrosive effects of intoxicating beverages upon a stomach's lining. The class looked on with horror when she poured some 95 per cent. alcohol on an egg, thereby causing it to shrivel and coagulate. The demonstrator was pleased to observe the interest displayed by the janitor, who had come in for the waste baskets. It was well known that he had need of such warning.

"Ma'am," he asked timidly, "wud you mind telling me where you buy yer licker?"

* * *



Mrs. Hamler—I don't see the Darts' parlor lit up on Wednesday evenings any more.

Mrs. Kaboux—Then it must be true that Gracie is engaged.

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CHAPTER IX.

As DAN walked in the direction of the village he met Phil Simpkins who was taking a drive. Phil drew rein.

"See here, you fellow," he called, "you were the cause of my buggy getting broken and I want you to pay for it."

"Do you?" said Dan.

"Yes, I do, and I mean that you shall, [illegible] you appear to have money to loan."

"If you had minded your own business your buggy would not have been broken," replied Dan.

"I shan't argue the matter with you. Are you going to pay me?"

"I don't owe you anything."

"You owe me ten dollars, and I mean to have it."

"I don't see how you are going to get it," replied Dan.

"I may take it out of your hide!" blustered Phil, flourishing his whip.

"The way you did yesterday?" queried Dan with a smile.

"If I hadn't slipped and fallen I should have given you the worst licking you ever got!" cried Phil, his anger increasing. "I have a mind to do it now."

"I wouldn't if I were you."

"Why not?"

"You would probably slip and fall again," answered Dan.

"Don't you be too sure of that. I have thrashed bigger boys than you."

"But more smaller ones, I imagine," replied Dan.

"Well, I'm not going to waste words on you. I mean to make you pay for the damage to my buggy, or I shall make the town too hot to hold you!"

"Running a sort of weather bureau, are you?" laughed Dan. "I didn't know you were responsible for this hot weath-[illegible]

"I won't be [illegible] you don't [illegible]

"[illegible]h, I'm [illegible]

"[illegible] fool," [illegible]

"[illegible] is very important, if true," smiled Dan. "How did you find it out?"

"I shan't talk with you any longer," retorted Phil. "Any one can see that you are a fool."

He gave his horse a cut and drove on. Dan smiled as he continued on his way. His cool indifference to Phil's bullying way had exasperated the bully, and Dan was only amused at his insolence.

During the week following, Dan was fortunate enough to get five days' work. He worked three days at the mill, assisting the workers who were repairing a break in the dam, and two days he worked in the mill, packing flour and sacking chop feed.

For this work he received six dollars and a quarter. Five dollars he gave to his aunt, having a dollar and twenty-five cents left.

"This leaves me a little richer than when I began," he thought, "which is better than running behind."

Among the effects Dan had brought with him was a small japanned box, containing a number of letters, some notes and other documents which had belonged to his father. He had merely glanced over these when he had taken them from his father's desk, but now as he was overhauling the contents of his valise he decided to make a careful examination of the box.

The first thing to attract his notice was a note for one hundred dollars, given by Richard Forbes five years before. It was now three years past due and nothing had been paid on it.

"I guess that is of no value," thought Dan. "Forbes left the country four years ago and has not been heard from since."

There was also a note for five hundred dollars given in favor of Reginald Newton by Sneed & Williams, a firm that went into bankruptcy, five or six years before.

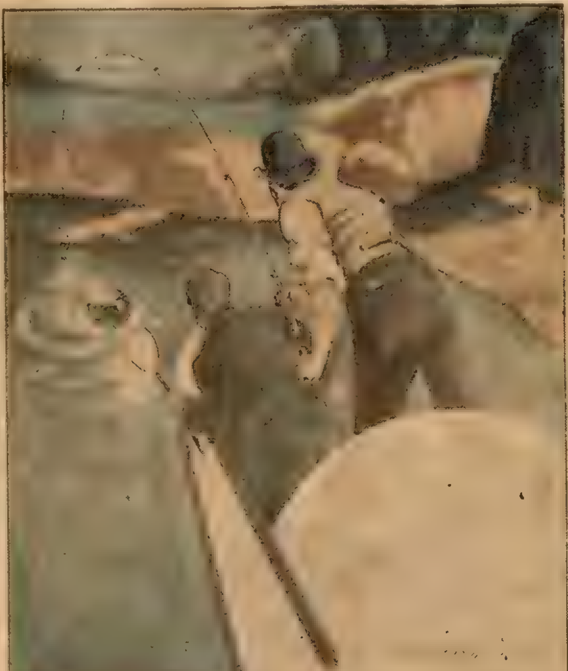
That Dan also put down as worthless.

There was also a deed for a forty-acre tract of land situated near the town of Agateville. Some documents which were found enclosed in the envelope with the deed proved the land to be next to worthless. It lay among the flint hills, with no part of it suitable for cultivation. An examination of the papers showed that the taxes standing against it had been accumulating for years, and the land was also set down as worthless.

Dan went through the papers carefully, assisted by his aunt, but nothing of any value worth considering was found.

Saturday afternoon, Dan went over to the mill to find out if there were any prospect for work the next week.

"I am sorry I have nothing for you to do," the miller said. "You are the kind of a boy I like to have around, but Higgins will be able to go to work Monday and I have nothing I can give you to do at present. If there is any opening I will let you know."



Full two feet above the water.

Dan, on leaving the mill, walked leisurely along the bank of the river. Clear River was not a large stream, but there flowed an immense amount of clear water between its banks, and this had given it the dignity of being classed as a river.

"I suppose I may as well make up my mind to leave Springhaven," Dan thought, as he crossed the dam and pursued his way up the stream.

The afternoon sun fell in patches on the limpid surface of the river, the dark shadows of the birches falling between, so that the whole bosom of the stream was dappled with gray and gold.

The water looked cool and inviting, and after a plunge in it, Dan was about to retrace his steps down the stream when a queer-looking craft came into view. Dan stood watching it with interest.

CHAPTER X.

The craft was a light, flat-bottomed affair, not over sixteen feet in length, with a sort of cabin amidship and awnings fore and aft.

In the stern, under the strip of striped awning, sat a man of some forty years. One hand rested on the rudder while the other lay affectionately on a black dachshund that lay asleep on the seat beside him. He held a pipe between his lips at which he puffed lazily, leaving a trail of gray wisps of smoke hanging over the surface of the water behind.

As the boat drew nearer Dan saw the following, painted in rude letters, near [illegible]

THE MERRY GOOSE.
"Captain Ben Hickman."

Dan reached the dam and stood watching the Merry-Goose float lazily onward.

Suddenly the captain straightened himself up, cast a quick glance ahead and then threw out his hand in a gesture of disgust. His eyes had rested on the dam, which now barred his further progress. But his face soon assumed its habitual impassive cast, and taking an oar from the bottom of the boat, he ran the Merry Goose skilfully up to the dam and stepped out.

"Now, what did you do that for?" he asked, turning to Dan, a curious expression on his face, and flinging one hand toward the dam. "I thought this pesky river was open to navigation."

Under the shadow of annoyance a humorous smile lurked about the corners of the man's mouth.

"You'll have to blame the owner of the mill," replied Dan. "But maybe he didn't know you were coming," he added with a smile.

The captain of the Merry Goose laughed.

"In that case I'll let him off," he said. "You don't reckon he'd compromise by moving the dam?"

"You might see him. I have found him very obliging," replied Dan.

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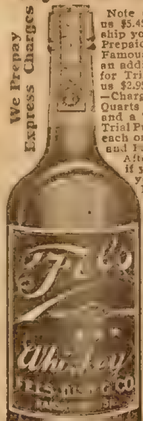

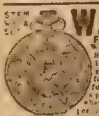

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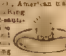

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"Well, I haven't time to wait. I've got to get the Merry Goose around this dam some way."

"Can I help you?" asked Dan.

"You can that, my boy, and I'm mighty glad to have your help. The Merry Goose isn't so heavy when she discharges her cargo, and I think we can manage her."

"I think so, too, sir."

"Then the first thing to be done is to get my traps out. Come here, Toad," he called to the dog. "Come out and get acquainted with the young gentleman that's going to give us a lift. I know you'll like to make his acquaintance."

The dog got up, yawned and stretched himself, evidently not relishing the idea of being disturbed. However, he leaped ashore and advanced to his master's side, wagging his tail.

"Now sit up."

The dog obeyed, standing erect on his hind feet.

"This is Toad?—what is your name?" said the captain, turning to Dan.

Dan gave his name.

"This is Mr. Newton, Toad. Give the gentleman your paw."

The dog held out his left foot, which Dan took, saying, "I am glad to meet you, Toad."

"Now, the other," said the captain, and the dog put out his other foot, but in doing so tumbled awkwardly over.

The captain laughed.

"He isn't very good at sitting up," he said. "But he means to do the right thing."

"He's a fine dog," said Dan, stroking Toad's glossy coat. "Is he a hunter?"

"First class. He's got a nose like a bloodhound."

"Have you ever trained him to perform tricks?"

"I have tried, but he don't take to that sort of thing. He seems to think it time wasted, which shows that he is something of a philosopher."

The captain now fell to work removing his effects from the boat, while Dan assisted him. When the work was finished, the two laid hold of the Merry Goose and drew her out of the water.

The water was almost to the top of the dam, and the boat was soon brought to a point from which there was a gradual slope to the stream below. The work was now easy, and in a few minutes the little craft was safely launched in the quiet waters below the eddy that swirled under the dam.

"Now, when I get my furniture stowed aboard," remarked the captain, "we'll throw out some lines and see what kind of fish we can catch. What do you say?"

"I should like that," responded Dan. "I am not much of a fisherman, but I'm willing to learn."

"Oh, it isn't much of a trick to catch fish, but they say it takes a lazy fellow to do the business properly. I suppose that is one reason I always had such good luck."

"It is easy to be lazy such a day as this," remarked Dan, wiping the perspiration from his brow, "and I feel as if I should have excellent luck."

"So do I," chuckled the captain, as they fell to work repacking the things in the boat.

There were a roll of blankets, a small tent, a number of cooking utensils, some tin plates, cups, knives and forks and a box well stored with provisions. There were also a coil of rope, picks and a shovel, a drill and hammer and a small box of giant powder.

"You see I am pretty well equipped for furnishing my own board and lodging," remarked the captain. "I am on my way to Jacktown, the new lead and zinc mining camp fifty miles down the river, and as there isn't a railroad within fifty miles of the place, I thought that the best and cheapest way to get my outfit there was to ship it aboard the Merry Goose."

"Are you going to work in the mines?"

"Yes. I have a lot on the Murphy mining tract, and I'm going to put down a hole and try my luck."

"I wish you success."

"Thank you, my boy. I intend to stay with it and do my best."

As they carried the things to the boat, Toad, who was always at his master's heels, followed back and forth, as if superintending the work.

"Toad, don't you think you ought to help with the work?" asked the captain.

The dog wagged his tail.

"Then you may bring this," and he tossed an old coat to the dog. Toad sniffed at it, then stretching himself on it, prepared for a nap.

Dan laughed.

"Is that the way he obeys?" he asked.

"Yes, when it is something he don't want to do. I guess he thinks it is too hot to work."

"Smart dog," laughed Dan.

"I guess it's laziness more than smartness," remarked the captain.

"Then we might set him to fishing."

"That's right. We might give him a line."

When everything had been replaced in the boat, the captain brought out a box of fishing tackle and invited Dan to select what he wanted.

"I haven't got but one reel," the captain said, "but you may take it if you wish."

"I'd rather not," replied Dan. "I wouldn't know how to manage it. I never tried to use a reel but once, and the first cast I made I got the line tangled and it took me an hour to straighten it out."

"That was about my experience," laughed the captain, "but I can do better now. I use a jointed rod for a reel, but you will find a couple of good cane poles fastened to the inside of the boat."

Dan selected one of these, and choosing a heavy linen line with a big cork and bass hook, he was ready.

"What shall we get for bait?" Dan asked.

"I always use live bait when I can get it," replied the captain. He brought out a small minnow seine, and a little way down the stream they found a shoal where they soon caught all the minnows they wanted.

"Now, where shall we fish?" asked Dan.

"I think there is a good place further down the stream," replied the captain. "Come on. We'll soon see."

They entered the boat, followed by Toad, who seemed to be anxious to be off, and the boat was pushed out into the current. They floated down stream for nearly a quarter of a mile. Then the captain, who was keeping a sharp watch ahead, nodded with a smile of satisfaction.

"There's the place, my boy," he said, indicating a spot in a deep hole where the trunk of a huge tree was half submerged. "You can always depend on it that you will find good bass prowling around a place where there are logs or driftwood in the water. We must drop down steadily."

He seized an oar and skilfully turned the boat to the left, and a few moments later dropped anchor about forty feet from the fallen tree.

"Isn't this too far away?" asked Dan.

"No. We should frighten the bass away if we went too close. I shall cast my line over there easily. While I am trying for a bass, you can throw your line in the current over there and hook a channel cat. Have you ever caught one?"

"Not that I can remember."

"Then I may as well tell you that it is no easy job to land one, if he is large. If you hook one, don't get excited, but keep cool and don't give him any chance to make a run on you."

"I'll remember, but I'm afraid I shall not have a chance to land one. I never was very lucky at fishing."

"There isn't so much in luck as there is in knowing just where to cast your line," said the captain. "Throw up stream as far as you can and let your bait float down with the current. Keep repeating this and you'll get something, else I'm mistaken in my guess."

Dan did as directed, while Hickman watched approvingly.

"I think you will make it all right," he nodded. "Now I'll take a hand in the game."

Placing a good-sized minnow on his hook, he let out about three feet of line, adjusted the cork, and then made ready to make the cast.

Dan, forgetting his own line, watched with breathless interest. The captain balanced the rod in his hand for an instant, then swinging it backward, brought it forward with a skilful sweep. The reel spun round noiselessly and the line ran out with an almost inaudible

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"swish," and the next instant the baited hook fell within a foot of the log. As it struck the water—or almost before it struck, Dan thought—there was a sudden upheaval on the surface of the stream. For an instant the water boiled up in a cone of bubbles and then sank back and as it did so the cork went down like a flash!

"Gee! but that was a fine strike!" cried the captain. "Now look out for some fun!"

"Pull him! He's gone with it!" breathed Dan excitedly.

The captain smiled.

"We mustn't hurry him," he said.

The slack in the line was following the cork down into the depths of the deep hole. For about six feet it ran out steadily and then stopped.

Dan's excitement increased.

"Why don't you pull him?" he asked.

"I'm waiting for him to decide what he's going to do with that minnow," replied the captain impassively.

Still the line did not move. More than forty feet of the silken line, which had not yet become wet, lay floating on the placid surface of the stream. The captain stood leaning against the cabin, his thumb held firmly on the spool, ready for action.

Dan waited in painful suspense. Why didn't the man pull? That was a question that he could not answer.

The line lay immovable on the waveless bosom of the stream. The seconds passed, ten, fifteen, a half a minute, and still the cork remained down and the line motionless. This was a strange way to fish for bass, Dan thought.

"Why don't you jerk him now?" he could not help asking.

"Do you see that line lying on the water?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir."

"I will never pull till the slack is taken up, if that fish dies with old age."

The words had scarcely left his lips when the line began to move and run steadily down into the water.

"Now I have got him!" remarked the captain, and as he spoke he gave a quick jerk and began to wind the reel.

There was a sudden tightening of the line; the rod bent and quivered, and out by the log there was a ripple on the surface of the water as the line swung back and forth like a pendulum, cutting like a knife through the liquid depths.

"He's trying to get to the log and tangle the line," remarked the captain, pulling steadily, but holding the rod so as to utilize all the spring. "There! he's given it up and is taking a run up stream!"

The line cut a wide circle and swung upward against the current, and then with a sudden turn, shot for the deep water below. The captain stood alert and watchful. Now he would turn the reel for a moment, and the next would lean forward quickly to relieve the strain, while the rod quivered like a reed in the wind.

Dan watched in breathless admiration. It was the superior mind of man matched against the subtle and cunning instincts of the lower animal—a battle in which the forces were so nearly matched as to retain all the elements of uncertainty. The bass, with only that mysterious quality which we call natural instinct, was battling for his life, single-handed, against a foe whose mind has for thousands of years been trained in setting cunning devices for his destruction. Yet the issue could not be foretold.

Dan had quite forgotten his own line, and all his interest was centered on the battle going on. The captain remained cool but alert, playing out the line now when the strain was too great, and now winding the reel with a deft and skilful hand as the tension relaxed. Foot by foot the silken cord—which more than once had seemed ready to snap—was swept onto the revolving spool, and so the battle continued.

Less than thirty feet of line now remained out, but the big bass was contesting every inch of line that was taken up, sweeping now to the left and now to the right. Again he shot up the stream, this time so near the surface that his superb outlines were visible in a long ribbon-like flash, and as he felt the steady pull of the line, he rounded a quick curve in a mad rush. As he turned there was for one instant a slight slackening of the tension, and the next instant he shot upward full two feet above the water, with mouth wide open, he rose out of the boiling foam he had made, shook himself in a wild endeavor to free himself from the goading hook, and then fell back with a loud splash and vanished amid a swarm of gleaming bubbles. This was the beginning of the end. His rushes now became more feeble, and foot by foot he was drawn nearer and nearer to the boat. When only ten feet of line remained out, he made a sudden rush for the boat, endeavoring to get beneath, but the alert captain, anticipating the move, foiled him in his attempt, and a few moments later Dan placed a landing net beneath him and he was lifted gently into the boat.

"Five pounds if an ounce!" said the captain, as he lighted his pipe and sat down to contemplate the prize.

CHAPTER XI.

"Say, but he is a beauty!" cried Dan.

"He is that," nodded the captain. "What a fine fight he made! Do you know that I never land a gamy fish like that without feeling a little mean? That's a fact. But there is a strain of the primitive man in us all—something of the old spirit—a passion for slaughter—that was once necessary to human existence. Look! There goes your pole!"

While the two had been conversing a large channel cat had struck Dan's hook, and now as he turned in response to the captain's warning, Dan saw the pole slipping rapidly from the boat.

With a bound he seized it just in time, and giving a quick jerk, held the line tight as the captain had instructed. Then there began a lively tussle which lasted for five minutes, while the captain remained an enthusiastic spectator, cautioning Dan and cheering him by turns.

When the cat was finally landed in the boat, Dan was quite out of breath, but elated over his victory.

"You have beaten me!" declared the captain. "Your channel cat will tip the scales at six pounds at least!"

"He felt as if he weighed a ton," laughed Dan. "I was sure he would break the line at one time."

"You did fine," the captain said.

The two fish were put on a string and fastened to the boat. Then the lines were put out again. The captain soon caught another bass which weighed about two pounds.

"I think we have all we need," announced the captain. "Suppose we knock off?"

"I'm agreed," sanctioned Dan. "It seems wasteful to catch more than one really needs."

"So it does. I make it a rule to quit fishing whenever I get all I want. Sometimes I quit before this is accomplished," smiled the captain, "for one doesn't always have such luck as we have had this evening."

They put the boat ashore near a well-shaded grassy slope, and the captain looked over the place approvingly.

"This is a first-class place to camp," he said, "and as I expect to remain here over Sunday, I'll just pitch my tent. The village of Springhaven is just over the hill there, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," answered Dan.

"That's what I thought, though I have not been through this neck of the woods for nigh onto twenty years. Do you live there?"

"I just arrived a week or so ago, but don't intend to stay."

"Know a man by the name of Simpkins?"

"I know of him. He is well known in the town."

"Well, he's my brother-in-law. Mrs. Simpkins is my sister, but I have not seen her for years."

"Then you must be anxious to see her?"

The captain was thoughtful for a moment.

"Well, yes, I might say that I am," he replied, presently, "but I ain't so powerful certain that she's so anxious to see me. She's my sister and we're both of the same flesh and blood, it is true, but even flesh and blood don't always count when one is rich and the other poor. I have been a poor man pretty much all my life and my sister Jane has seen poverty, too, but she married a rich man and she's never been the same since. But I'm going to see her. I think I shall go up right away after supper."

Dan did not feel called on to make any remarks about the captain's relative and remained silent.

The captain put his hand in his pocket and drew out some silver.

"Now, my boy, how much do I owe you for helping me get the Merry Goose across the dam?" he asked.

"Oh, that's all right," replied Dan. "I shouldn't think of asking anything for so small a service."

"That's not going to keep me from paying you," insisted the captain. "Here's half a dollar. It won't make you rich nor me poor, but will be something to put in your purse," and he dropped the coin into Dan's hand. "Now, here's a little advice for you, and I'm going to give it to you because I find you to be a good boy, and it may be of benefit to you in the future. Don't turn down money that you have honestly earned on account of pride. The rich people don't do it. They take all they can get and are sorry they can't get more. I don't mean that you shall expect to be paid for every little service you do out of pure kindness of heart. That is a part of the pleasure of life, and I would not want to deprive you of it. When those who are able to pay, however, offer you remuneration for something you have done, don't let mere pride stand in the way of accepting it. My sister is rich, but if I should offer her fifty cents for something she had done for me, she'd take the money quick enough. But I'm not going to give you a lecture, for that is something that boys don't like. Now, about the fish; I shall not want any but the small bass. That will be as much as I can eat, and the cat and the big bass are yours."

"Why, surely you don't mean it?" cried Dan.

"Sure thing. It would be wasteful for me to keep one of the big fish when the small one is all I can use."

"But you might carry the bass to your sister?"

"It's kind of you to think of her, but she wouldn't eat fish if she starved. There are a few such people in the world, though I could never understand their taste. She has more than once declared that if I had fished less and been more industrious I might have been rich, and there may be someting in that, but I should have missed a great deal of pleasure, such as only the angler knows."

"I am very much obliged to you," said Dan, "and as you are so kind, you must come with me and have supper. My aunt will be glad to welcome you. I am staying with her."

"Well, now that hits me about right. It seems good to get a taste of a woman's cooking now and then, and I thank you for giving me the chance, for I am not sure," he added with a smile, "that sister Jane will ask me to stay for supper, she is always haunted with such a terrible fear that I shall ask her to give me a home."

The captain brought out the fish, and having tied the small one so it could remain in the water till it was needed, he placed the other two in a wet grass sack.

"We can carry them in that and they'll live for hours," he remarked. "Now, if you are ready, I'll make things snug and we'll walk up to the village."

"I'm ready," replied Dan. "But will your boat and outfit be safe left alone?"

"Oh, I have never had any one bother

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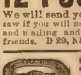

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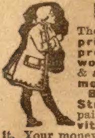

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things. I shall lock the boat to the shore and I have a locker aboard where I keep most things of any value. I'll turn the keys and then we'll be off."

"Won't Toad stay and guard the boat?" asked Dan, glancing at the dog which was now alert and eager to be off.

"He don't like to left alone," said the captain "and I usually take him with me. He couldn't do much against tramps if they should pay the boat a visit, and they might hurt him, which I should hate more than losing a few articles."

As they walked in the direction of the village the dog ran ahead, delighted at a chance to get a little exercise.

CHAPTER XII.

It was past the middle of the afternoon when Dan and the captain reached the village.

"I hope your aunt won't be offended by my calling at her home in these shabby togs," remarked the captain, as he cast a glance at his faded suit of jeans, "but I am out roughing it, and these are the best I have with me."

"You need have no fears on that score," assured Dan. "My aunt is not so fastidious. All of us find it convenient to wear our old clothes."

Near the White Oak Inn was a small restaurant where iced drinks were kept, and as they were passing the captain said, "Let's go in and have a glass of lemonade."

After they had drank the lemonade Dan ordered some soda, and as they went out the proprietor followed them to the door.

"Have you got fish in the sack?" he asked.

"A couple," replied Dan, opening the mouth of the bag.

The restaurant-keeper whistled.

"Say, but they are beauties!" he cried. "Could you spare me that channel cat? I'd like to buy it. You have enough there for a dozen people. I'll give you fifty cents for it."

The captain nodded to Dan.

"All right; you can have it," Dan replied. "I guess the bass will be enough for us."

"A plenty," nodded the captain.

The restaurant-keeper was very much pleased.

"Here's your money," he said, handing Dan a silver half-dollar. "I am obliged to you in the bargain. It will bring me trade."

He placed it in the window and covered it with ice. A number of passers-by stopped to admire it.

"Who caught it?" asked an old man.

"The boy there," said the restaurant-keeper.

"By gum! I'll bet it gave ye a tussle," chuckled the old man.

"He did. I was afraid he would break the line," Dan answered.

"He's got a fine bass in the sack," the restaurant-keeper.

The old man asked to see it, and the crowd gathered about.

"I didn't catch this," Dan confessed. "Mr. Hickman here caught it. It gave him a fine battle. It was worth seeing."

"I'll be bound," cried the old man.

As they were leaving the restaurant they met Phil Simpkins. He cast a sneering glance at Dan and the captain.

"I see you have picked up a partner," he said. "You will make a nice pair."

"Do you think so?" asked Dan quietly.

"Birds of a feather, you know."

"Perhaps you do not this gentleman?" Dan said.

Phil laughed sneeringly.

"Oh, I don't care to make his acquaintance," he declared.

"Then you don't recognize him?"

"Hardly. Is he Pierpont Morgan in disguise?"

"You have to guess again."

"I'd rather not."

"Then I shall tell you."

"Don't take the trouble."

"Who is this boy?" asked the captain.

"He's your nephew," replied Dan.

"Surely this can't be little Phil who seemed so fond of me when I visited my sister ten years ago?"

"He is Phil Simpkins," replied Dan.

Phil colored with confusion as he glanced at the stranger.

The captain advanced and held out his hand.

"Don't you know me, Phil?" he asked. "I am your uncle, Ben Hickman. Bless me! how you have grown!"

Phil took the extended hand in a confused, reluctant way. He did not know what to say.

"Is your mother well?" asked the captain.

"Quite well," replied Phil indifferently.

"I am glad to hear it. I must run over and see her."

"Do you expect to stay long?" Phil asked uneasily.

turned quickly and ran up the stairs aga

"Well, I hadn't thought of it. I am on my way down the river and shall slide on in a day or so."

Phil looked relieved.

"I have not visited my sister since she moved here," said the captain. "If you are going home soon I'll get you to show me the way."

"I—I have an engagement," Phil made haste to say. "Any one can direct you to the place."

A queer smile crept into the face of the captain. He was shrewd enough to understand.

"All right, I shan't trouble you," he remarked.

"I'll show you the way," interposed Dan.

"Thank you, my boy," replied the captain. "I think I shall go over and see my sister and call at your aunt's house in time to keep my appointment."

"That will do. I will show you the house as we go across the street."

At this juncture Milly Dent came out of a store near by. Phil smiled and lifted his hat. He was about to turn and accompany her down the street when she stopped abruptly and turned to Dan.

"Oh, Mr. Newton, I have some news for you," she said, as she turned to greet him.

"It must be pleasant news since you are the bearer," responded Dan, raising his hat.

"It is," she agreed. "My uncle has returned and he wants you to come and take dinner with us tomorrow."

"That is good news," smiled Dan. "I thank you very much. I shall be pleased to come."

"Then we shall expect you."

During this dialogue Phil Simpkins stood apart, his face the picture of surprise and mortification. No girl in the village was held in higher esteem than the granddaughter of Judge Turkington. Known to be an heiress to a large fortune left her by a deceased relative, as well as the favorite niece of Judge Turkington and his wife, Phil felt himself honored in being classed among her friends. It was no wonder, then, that he felt piqued and surprised to witness the evidence of intimacy between her and Dan Newton.

That was not all. It appeared that Dan was in some way on intimate terms with Judge Turkington himself, as was proved by the invitation to dinner. Phil reflected, with much chagrin, that he himself had never been honored by a similar invitation. And what added to his mortification was, that he was compelled to stand silently by and witness it all.

He wished that Milly Dent would not prolong the conversation, and he might have been gratified in this wish had she not accidentally caught sight of the bass in the half-open bag Dan carried.

"Oh, what a beautiful fish!" she cried. "Did you catch it?"

"I must confess that I was not that lucky person," replied Dan. "It was caught by my friend here. Miss Dent, let me introduce you to Captain Hickman, who has been giving me some lessons in angling. He is making a voyage down the river in a very pretty little houseboat which he calls the Merry Goose."

"I am pleased to meet you, Captain Hickman," she said, with the frankness of youth, extending her hand.

"The pleasure is mine," returned the

(Continued on page twenty-seven.)

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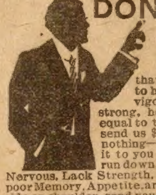

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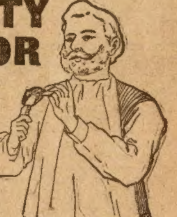

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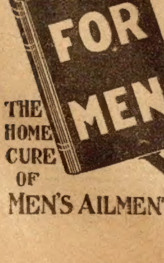

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AT THE PARTY.

The party day has come and been,
An' I've got off my shoes agin;
Got off my tie and collar, too,
An' doin' like I like to do.
Gee whiz! There are some kids I know,
As young as me, that has to go
In collar'n tie an' shoes an' things
Just all the time. Vacation brings
No joy to them like comes to me,
Barefoot and raggedy and free.

The clothes I wear can't come to grief,
An' I don't have no handkerchief
With its white corner stickin' out
The pocket of my roundabout;
I just wear pants and shirt and hat,
An' I've a notion too, that that
Is all a kid should ever wear—
This weather, those is clothes to spare
I don't see where would be the joy
Of dressin' like a Fauntleroy!

But at the party I et pie
An' pink ice cream till by-an'-by—
A long, long time before 'twas night—
I couldn't eat another bite!.
I might have chewed a little bit,
But couldn t never swaller it!
An' they had kissin' games there, too,
Like I was scared that they would do,
An' when they played "clap in, clap out"—
Well, that's what I won't tell about!

◆

Only a Yellow Dog.

A street car was bouncing along on the rails on its way to downtown Baltimore. It was loaded with passengers, and they were all in a hurry. In the street there was a yellow dog, and just as the car came up with him he started to cross the track. You have seen it done many times if you ride on the front platform. The yellow dog lopes along the side of the tracks and then starts across. He looks at the oncoming car and runs sideways while he looks, and his ears droop mournfully. The motorman clangs the bell and the dog puts his tail between his legs and hops off the track just three inches ahead of the fender. This particular yellow dog followed the programme well enough, but he had no eye for time. The car was going faster than he thought, and it caught him in the middle of the track. He went under, while the motorman ground on the brakes. The motorman had two reasons for stopping the car. He did not care especially about killing anything, and, moreover, a dog's body can sometimes throw a car off the track. The car stopped but the yelps did not. They started when the dog went under, and they showed that he was not entirely killed and that his throat was wholly uninjured. The passengers all got out when the car stopped and they all looked under the car to see the ghastly sight, but there was nothing of the sort to see except cobblestones. The yelps came from a doggy ghost, perhaps, but they did seem rather ordinary and as if more from fear than hurt. At last some one discovered the yellow dog sitting on the truck over an axle. He would not be coaxed out and none of the men were brave enough to crawl under the car to get a frightened dog which might have a bad temper. The car might have been there till doomsday if a small boy had not crept beneath the car and hauled out the dog, which was perfectly willing to be rescued.

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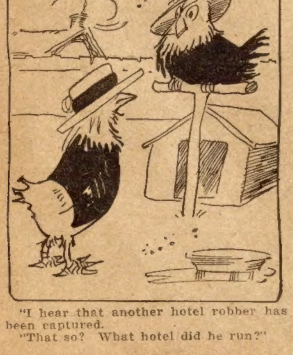


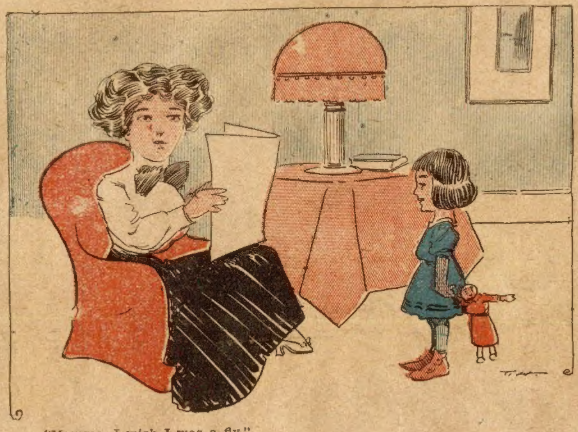
"I hear that another hotel robber has been captured.

"That so? What hotel did he run?"

Bob-Cat and House-Cat.

There never was a man, woman or child that could understand cats. Cats are soft, purring creatures that come and beg for something to eat or some petting, and then, again, cats are beings of the untamed world, detesting man. The ancestors of all the "domestic" animals were savage at one time and the cat, more than any other animal, retains its savagery. This was shown to good effect recently in Arkansas, where the owner of a big plantation has a cat that is the champion of the neighborhood. He is a large cat, so heavy that a small child could not begin to lift him. His head is broad, his neck is short and his body is as strong as if it were made of steel. He would rather fight than eat.

The opportunity for a good fight came one night last week and the cat took the opportunity, which was in the shape of a wild cat or bob-cat. Bob-cats are larger and tawnier than children's pets and they live savagely alone in the wilderness. The one that visited the plantation was the largest that had ever been seen there. It came at night and found the house-cat at peace with all the world. The house-cat did not care to fight at that time, queer as it may seem, and he retired. The bob-cat followed and pretty soon Tom found himself in a corner. Then there was nothing to do except fight, and he fought. He crouched in the corner fixing his eyes on the eyes of the bob-cat, and singing a battle-song in his throat. The two beasts watched each other for a moment, one as savage and uncivilized as the other, and then the house-cat sprang at the bob-cat's throat. It was a true spring and it was enough to make the bob-cat eager to get away. With frightful yowls the two beasts fought along the vistor's retreat of a hundred yards or so, and by that time the planter had appeared with some dogs, who chased the bob-cat up a tree, so that the planter could shoot it. When the hunt was finished the house-cat went back to his favorite seat and slept as if nothing unusual had happened.



"Mamma, I wish I was a fly."

"And why, dear?"

"Teacher says a fly has a thousand eyes and I'm going to the circus tomorrow."

◆

Tobogganing.

It seems strange to think that any full-grown, four-footed animal should indulge in play like a child, and yet this is what the otter does. His amusement is tobogganing, and his playground is a slope, covered with ice or snow, that goes downgrade into a pool of water. Here he takes his recreation, and no little boy with a new sled ever enjoys a coast down an ice-bound hill more than this beautiful creature of the frozen north.

The otter is perhaps the most interesting of the fur-bearing animals. He is quite large, sometimes weighing as much as 25 pounds. He resembles the seal and the mink, though of heavier build, and is both supple and strong. Living for the most part in water, he preys on fish, which his swimming and diving abilty enables him to catch easily. The entrance to his home, which is a burrow in the bank of a stream, is under the water.

In the early spring, when the ice begins to thaw, the otters start on their travels from one stream to another, sometimes passing months on the journey. If they happen to see an inviting hill by the wayside, they immediately stop their pilgrimage and prepare for some sport. One of the number leaves the water and slowly climbs the slope, making a smooth hollow in the snow with his body. When the slide is prepared, he lies flat on his stomach, thrusts his nose forward, and turning his forepaws under his soft sides, goes sailing swiftly down. His speed steadily increases until he reaches the water. Silently he parts the surface and is lost from sight for a few seconds. Then his head appears above the surface, and you can hear him give a call that sounds like a whistle. This is a signal. The next otter assumes the position and shoots to the bottom to join his companion, who has meanwhile crawled out on the ice. Then another whistle, and the next in order slides and plunges. The performance is kept up until each one has several trips to his credit.

The first makers of a slide will keep this up for an indefinite time, speeding down hill and then trudging up again to their positions at the top, where they wait for the whistle from below, in the meantime playfully biting one another or rolling in the snow. Finally, though, when, like children, they begin to tire of their amusement, they go back in the water and fish. Even then, if they should happen to spy another slide, abandoned by a different band of otters, they cannot resist at least one trip. In fact, others prefer the ready-made places. It is only when they are unable to find any such that they go through the laborious business of smoothing a hollow in the snow. There seems to be no reason for this practice beyond that of pure enjoyment. The otter has his play just as the puppy or kitten, though he is perhaps more human in his methods.

◆

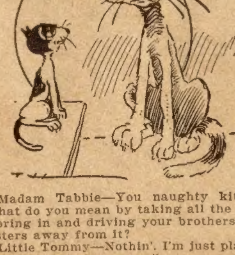
His Objection.

When the doors opened in the little Indiana theater a farmer wandered in and looked around.

"Ticket please," said the doorkeeper.

"The only thing I've got agin these here op'rys," said the Hoosier as he walked away, "is that they don't begin till bedtime."

◆



Madam Tabbie—You naughty kitten! What do you mean by taking all the food I bring in and driving your brothers and sisters away from it?

Little Tommy—Nothin'. I'm just playin' "pussy wants a corner."

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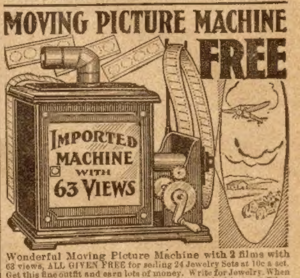

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The Merry Goose Mine

(Continued from page twenty-five.)

captain, gallantly, raising his hat and bowing gracefully as he took her hand. "I see that you are already acquainted with Phil there, who honors me by being my nephew."

"Indeed! So this is your uncle, is it?" she said, turning to Phil. "I think it is mean of you not to have introduced me."

Phil colored with confusion, while the captain laughed with good humor.

"I am afraid he is jealous of me," said the captain. "But, Miss Dent, wait till you have seen the Merry Goose. Then he'll have something to be jealous of."

Milly laughely gayly.

"I should be pleased to see your boat," she said. "It must be jolly, making a journey down the river in a houseboat."

"I think I should prefer the cars," remarked Phil. "I shouldn't fancy slopping around in a lubberly old boat."

"It isn't all pleasure," agreed the captain, "but it has its pleasant side."

They conversed for a few moments and then as Milly passed on down the street, Phil walked by her side.

"I am surprised that you should make the acquaintance of a low person like Dan Newton," he said.

"What right have you to speak of him as being low?" she asked quickly.

"He's a nobody," sneered Phil.

"That isn't very explicit. We are all nobodys more or less."

"He's no better than a tramp."

"He is a friend of mine and of my uncle and aunt. If you cannot speak of him with more respect I do not care to listen to you."

Phil's face grew red with chagrin and mortification.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he said. "I didn't know he was an especial friend of yours."

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming year.

* * *

Country Editors.

"You might think," said a country editor, according to the New York Sun, "that only the great city newspapers would have a mailing list covering a wide territory, but the fact is that every long established country newspaper has a mailing list which, while it may not be as large as that of the city newspaper, may be as varied and as widespread.

"Sons of the old town go out into the world seeking fortune and they scatter the world over.

"Many of these men, wherever they may be, retain their interest in their old home. In the city to which they have gone all their substantial interests now lie; there they are absorbed in their work and there they may come to be men prominent in and identified with the community. There is indeed now their home, and there their children are born, these, to be sure, to be interested in their home town, the city; but the man of the family, busy city man as he may now have come to be, still finds an interest in the old town whence he came, in what its people, the people he knew, are doing, in everything that is going on there; and so it may be that he will sit down after dinner, light a cigar the like of which could not be bought in the old place and tear the wrapper from the old familiar country weekly received in that day's mail.

"He will read not that stocks or bonds have done this or that, but that So-and-so has painted his barn or that the Presbyterian Church has a new minister and that So-and-so has sold his lot on the west side of Main street just south of the postoffice, or that some one else had bought a new reaper. He reads this all with a real interest; it's about people and scenes he knows and that still appeal to him.

"And he is not the only busy man in the city who takes and continues to read a country paper. It might surprise you if you could know the number of country papers sent regularly to any great city, say, for instance, to New York. Country papers come into New York from all parts of the country, mailed regularly to subscribers who have gone out from the old town to settle in the big cities, but who still preserve their interest in their old homes.

"So it may be that the mail that goes weekly from the country newspaper office down the tree-arched village street to the postoffice in a country store may contain papers not for country subscribers alone but as well papers going to the four quarters of the globe. The country editor's mailing list is perhaps not as big as that of the city daily, but it may be as far flung."

* * *

Punishment.

Among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo lying is almost unknown; and the telling of a lie is shamefully recorded by heaping a pile of branches, to which every passerby contributes—a punishment dreaded beyond all others.

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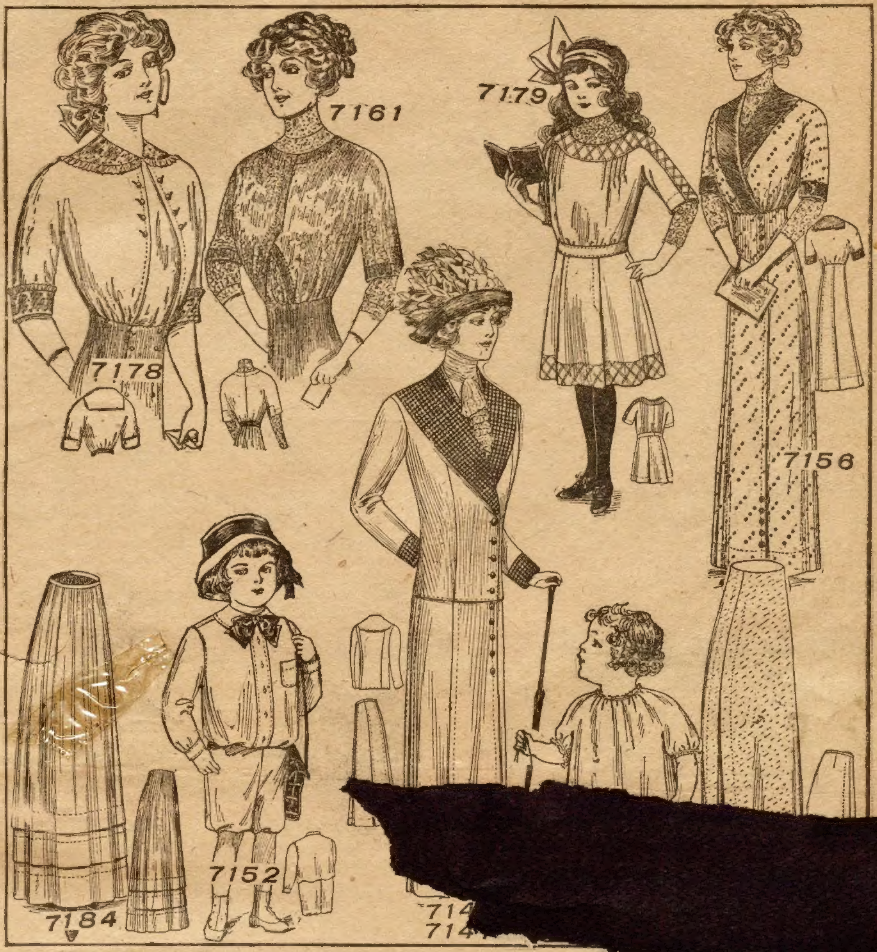

7178—Peasant Blouse for Misses and Small Women, 14, 16 and 18 years. For the 16-year size will be required 2 yards of material 27, 1½ yards 36, 1¼ yards 44 inches wide with ⅜ yard of silk for collar and cuffs, 1¾ yards of ruffling to trim as illustrated.

7161—Fancy Blouse, 34 to 40 bust. For the medium size the over blouse will require 2¼ yards of material 27 or 36, 1⅛ yards 44 inches wide with ½ yard of silk for the trimming; for the guimp will be needed 1¾ yards 36, 1½ yards 44 inches wide.

7179—Girl's Dress in Peasant Style, 10 to 14 years. For the 12-year size will be required 4¼ yards of material 27, 3¼ yards, 36, 2⅝ yards 44 inches wide with 2¼ yards 21 inches wide for the trimming.

7156—Semi-Princess Gown, 34 to 42 bust. For the medium size the dress will require 7½ yards of material 27, 6¾ yards 36, 4¾ yards 44 inches wide with ¾ yard 27 inches wide for collar and cuffs, 1 yard for chemisette and under-sleeves, the width of the skirt at the lower edge is 2¼ yards.

7184—Three-Piece Tucked Skirt for Misses and Small Women, 14, 16 and 18 years. For the 16-year size will be required 4½ yards of material 27, 3 yards 36 or 44 inches wide, the width of the skirt at the lower edge is 2⅛ yards.

7152—Boy's Blouse Suit, 4 to 6 years. For the 6-year size will be required 4⅛ yards of material 27, 3 yards 36, 2½ yards 44 inches wide.

7146—Double-Breasted Coat with Shawl Collar, 34 to 44 bust. 7147—Six Gored Skirt, 22 to 32 waist. For the medium size the coat will require 4 yards [illegible] 44 or 52 inches wide; for the skirt [illegible] needed 8¾ yards 27, 4 yards 44 or 52 inches wide if material has figure or nap; 6½ yards 27, 3½ yards 44 or 52 if there is neither figure nor nap.

7165—Child's Bishop Dress, 6 months, 1 and 2 years. For the 1-year size will be required 1⅝ yards of material 36 or 44 inches wide.

7153—Skirt with Deep Tunic Effect 22 to 30 waist. For medium size the tunic will require 3⅝ yards of material 27, 2½ yards 36 or 44 inches wide, the foundation will need 1⅝ yards 27, 36 or 44 inches wide; for the skirt of one material will be needed 5½ yards 27, 4½ yards 36, 4 yards 44 inches wide if there is figure or nap, 3¼ yards 44 inches wide if there is neither figure nor nap, the width of the skirt at the lower edge is 2½ yards.

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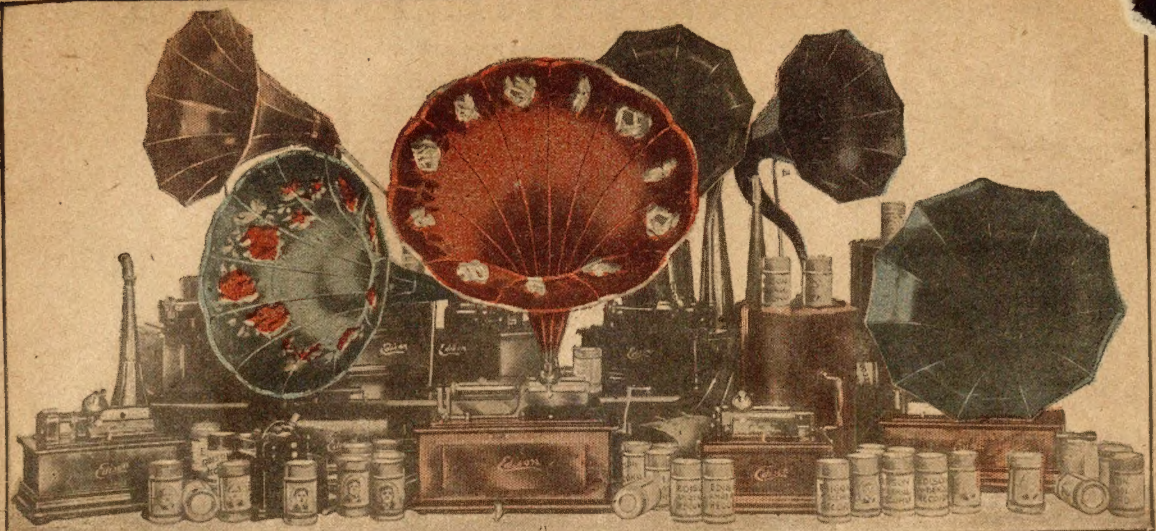

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